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Crossroads



A Study and Program Magazine for Adults

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A reader from Texas acted surprised when she heard that CROSSROADS follows the three annual themes of the whole *Christian Faith and Life* curriculum. CROSSROADS is a part of the curriculum and *does* follow the annual themes, especially and most concretely in the *Christian Faith and Life* articles (pages 20-54). With this issue *Crossroads* thrusts itself into a new year dominated by the theme "Jesus Christ Is Lord." The *Christian Faith and Life* articles throughout the year are centered in that theme, and all other articles in the magazine derive their interest from that theme. Other readers might not be surprised to hear this news but should at least be aware of what is happening.

"All other" articles in CROSSROADS means the twenty-five other articles in each issue. Three of these articles are called "program articles" (pages 9-19) and can be used for study and discussion purposes by groups with monthly meetings and a desire to tackle some interesting subjects. Six other articles (pages 78-95) have been written for parents' groups that want to consider together some of their pressing problems and opportunities as particular parents in a community of parents. Another series of thirteen articles (pages 55-77) has been designed for primary use with young adults (people hard to define but no less human for all that; at any rate, adults who are out of school are working, generally are single, and for all these and many other reasons, are not yet fully within the adult congregation of the church). Two or three articles for *all* readers appear at the beginning of the magazine.

Note to the careful reader: No matter what the primary reason may be for receiving the magazine, every one of the thirty-eight articles *can* be read. They may prove interesting and, of far greater importance, may enlarge understanding of the Christian faith and the boundaries within which the Christian faith must be considered in this beginning year of the sixth decade of the twentieth century.

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Crossroads

A STUDY AND PROGRAM MAGAZINE FOR ADULTS

OCTOBER 1, FOR October–December, 1960

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Head of Christ, by El Greco.

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*What is a play?
What makes it good?
What happens when you see one?
Why is studying one a dramatic experience?*

Plays are about human beings . . .

“So Attention

LINDA: . . . I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.

—*Death of a Salesman*¹ (Act One)

WHY must we pay attention to “such a person”? We obviously don't. No law compels us to pay attention to Willy Loman or to Linda who asks us to attend to Willy. Were we her sons, then we should have to give our attention at least to Linda and, because of who she is and the way she pleads, to Willy, our father. But we are not her sons. We are an audience seated in a theater or seated in our living rooms imagining that we are in a theater. Having sons of our own to give attention to, caught up as we are in our own going to the grave, we don't have to pay attention to Willy. We shall be poorer for having withheld the attention, but we have that choice: to get involved in Willy Loman's life or to stay out of his life altogether.

Willy Loman is a paper man. He does not have a real house in Brooklyn or a real wife named Linda or actual sons named Biff and Happy. He took form in the head of a play writer named Arthur Miller, who is perfectly real, with a real wife, real sons, and a post-office address. An actor named Lee J. Cobb was hired to pretend that he was a man named Willy Loman for about 150 minutes each evening. Thousands of people came to the Morosco Theater in New York City in order to see Mr. Cobb pretend to be the imaginary man written about by Arthur Miller, and they left the theater *almost* believing that a real man named Willy Loman had died. Many of them were still wiping back the tears. They knew, of course, that the play was make-believe, nothing more than “pretend,” but still the tears could not be stopped. Why not? They had chosen to get involved; they *paid attention* to

Willy Loman at the urgent request of his wife, Linda.

Readers of the play (now available in a Viking Press, Compass edition, 95 cents), have to imagine their way into Willy Loman by imagining, as they read, that they are seeing a play; but that is not too difficult. In fact, it is so easy that, for a while at least as they read on and on, Willy Loman's life becomes more important than going to bed or putting the book down or almost anything else. Readers, like the playgoers, have been known to weep, and a few have sobbed outright at the final scene. They, too, had *paid* attention; rather, they had *given* their attention to Willy.

Real people often compel us to pay attention. They are urgent and severe. With gestures, flashing eyes and turned-up volume, they demand that they be listened to. Real people can be ignored, just as Happy and Biff in the play, though touched by their mother, ignored her appeal. Real people confuse the expressions “pay attention” and “give attention,” just as Linda did. So, in our real day-to-day lives we do not often *give* attention. We listen to or notice or regard people somewhat mechanically, as though these were boring chores. At a play, of course we don't *have* to do anything; so we give, as one of our choicest gifts, our attention—our whole imaginative, perceptive, sympathetic understanding.

What Goes on Here?

Looking at a play or reading one is pure pretence. That's the secret of its power. A play doesn't count for anything. It is on paper; it does not happen on streets or in houses, but within a safe book of make-believe. When we decide to enter the make-believe world, however, we can't bring make-believe selves, because that's exactly what we don't have any of. We bring with us who we are and what we know about a real streets-and-houses-and-people world. *We*, the viewers and readers, put the play across—or else it doesn't get across.

¹ By Arthur Miller. Copyright, 1949, by Arthur Miller. All quotations are used by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

"Must Be Paid"

Willy Loman, the paper man, was not so paperish to the playgoers. What they saw on the stage they took inside themselves, and they went the playwright one better. They took Willy to their hearts as a husband or a neighbor or an employee or a buyer or a father. They imagined Willy in the only terms they knew about, namely, their *own*. That is why some of them wept at the final scene. *They* had created someone, and *he* had died.

In a play-reading group (about which we shall presently talk more), a young man, not yet twenty-five, agonized in bitter hatred of Willy Loman as the hotel scene (Act Two) was read. Why? Who knows? Perhaps Willy, on paper, had been taken inside the young man as his own nonpaper father. Or perhaps the young man himself became Willy. At any rate, the simple written words transformed this easygoing, self-assured young man into a desolate human being, racked with the pain of his own—and Willy's—life.

When *Death of a Salesman* is viewed or read, the "make-believe" situation becomes enlivened. A viewer becomes something more than a recording instrument; he reacts like the human being he is. Something about the wistful mediocrity of Willy Loman shocks him into considering his own life situation. He goes away weeping, perhaps, not only for Willy but for himself. In a word, imagination is what goes on here.

Not all stage plays, of course, or their scripts published in book form, invite us to use our imaginations. Some possess all the qualities of make-believe, but the make-believe situations merely amuse us as diversions from real life rather than call us to *give* our attention. As a matter of fact, the best workable standard by which to evaluate drama is the extent of its capacity to stimulate our imagination and involve us as full human beings both in the make-believe and in our own very real lives. *Death of a Salesman* has properly been hailed as a great play (not merely good) because of its superlative capacities to draw us out, to invite our commitment, to make us vulnerable to

both the whimsies and the implacable death beat that furnished the profound base of the play. At the risk of being too simple, we could say that a good play invites us to face ourselves as we truly are.

A Question of Taste

A good play does this primarily through dialogue—what the characters say and how they say it. The writers of most modern plays choose words for this dialogue without regard to whether these words are commonly used in public or not. This is part of the make-believe. People usually do talk in certain ways. Were the playwright to put only "public" words in the mouths of his characters, they would sound strange or forced, and the magical qualities of make-believe would disappear. (After all, the Lomans' kitchen is not a public banquet hall with a line-up of formal speakers. It is just a family's kitchen, that's all, and the members of the family don't deliver speeches there, they just talk.) For that reason most of the modern plays we see and read have uncensored dialogue. And this raises a question of taste.

Probably one of the most unique characteristics of American speech is the exaggerated and continual use of various exclamations. For instance, people are more apt to say, "Well, hello there!" or "Oh, Hello!" or "My goodness, I'm glad to see you!" than they are to say simply and directly, "Hello!" Likewise, words are used for emotional emphasis, but without any immediate reference to the exact meaning of the words. "Terribly" or "marvelous" are cases in point. Many American people in their everyday speech use words that once had theological significance or that refer to physical functions. Today these words are used simply as exclamations for emotional emphasis. People speak billions of words every day in any large American city, and occasionally they use these once-significant words simply as if they were saying, "You see how mad (or happy or disgusted) I am!" We should not be surprised then to find these same words being used by make-believe characters in plays as they express real make-believe thoughts and feelings.



The Lomans—Linda (Mildred Dunnock), Willy (Lee J. Cobb), Biff (Arthur Kennedy), and Happy (Cameron Mitchell)—as they appeared in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* at the Morosco Theater, New York, in 1949.

Some critics of the modern stage believe that our present-day playwrights violate the canons of good taste by using profane language unnecessarily. The critics fail to see, however, that the playwright, at this point, is in a dilemma. If he is to create dialogue for American characters, and if his make-believe is to be successful, the characters must speak to one another as real Americans speak to one another. The playwright can, of course, cut out the excessive exclamations, common slang, and words used for emotional emphasis, or he can substitute ordinary words acceptable "in public." But if he does either, it will be at the expense of making the dialogue unreal.

People today use words which once had a general theological significance, but which now have that meaning for only a very few people in our population. If the use of such words is profane, then the American people are a profane people—not merely the playwrights or the audiences at plays or the readers of plays, but the millions upon millions of Americans who use these words every day. If that's the case, then the question of taste is beside the point. For Willy Loman, "god" has no more bearing on "God" than any other three-letter word such as "was" or "the." And isn't this one of the most perplexing questions which the play raises for viewers and readers? Namely, that words have lost their stuff, life has run down, and no one dares face the truth. That is a situation about which a question of taste can scarcely be raised. That is a situation that causes us to weep.

The Question of Faith

Death of a Salesman reveals the bankruptcy of a pagan success-faith. Happy, the younger son of Willy and Linda Loman, never quite gets the point; and, consequently, his pitiful reaffirmation of faith in the final scene appears as the last indication that the faith is dead:

BIFF: He [Willy] had the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong.

HAPPY, *almost ready to fight Biff*: Don't say that! . . . I'm not licked that easily. I'm staying right in this city, and I'm gonna beat this racket! *He looks at Biff, his chin set.* The Loman Brothers!

BIFF: I know who I am, kid.

HAPPY: All right, boy. I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have—to come out number-one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him.

But Willy did die in vain, if he died in order to demonstrate the virtues of the faith by which he had rather ineptly lived. With more truth, Biff acknowledges the sullen facts. He sees that this faith killed his father. The get-ahead-or-bust idea drives its devotees to tragic ends because not all of them get ahead. Some don't have the knack, or the opportunity, or the inside pull, or the necessary magical "something." They are "busted." They didn't make it. Therefore, they are stuck with broken dreams, with a broken mind, and, inevitably, with a broken life.

That Americans go in for such primitive and savage religious rites is a scandalous assertion; yet Arthur Miller gives the details for everyone to look at in saddened reflection. Africa or aboriginal Australia or New Guinea seem to be more suitable locales for this kind of play, we think. Unfortunately, however, the facts revealed by the playwright are anchored in America. We are the ones who demand absolute loyalty to the religious principle of get ahead or bust, who banish the unsuccessful from our presence and drive them to graves. We are the ones who practice this religion, celebrate its rituals, grant sainthood to its heroes, and build magnificent cathedrals a quarter

a mile high in order to induce proper reverence. Willy Loman was a true believer. He belonged to what he thought of as a mystic brotherhood of salesmen. To him, salesmen were slightly daft, living from week to week in the ever-certain hope that someday, somehow, they'd be able to park the sample cases on the floor of a hotel room, contact their customers by phone, and win orders on the sheer good will they had already established. Their lives apparently were based on nothing more substantial than the gossamer threads of fancy. The dividing line between truth and fiction gets blurred for such people. They become religious fanatics, accepting the fancy instead of the truthful fact and passionately affirming their beliefs against unbelievers—such as Biff or Linda or Charley. Most of the people who saw the play on the stage—in the movies, or who now read it, belong to the religion depicted by Arthur Miller. They, too, are believers—and happy believers, at that, because they have got ahead and thus are not busted. They are actually as fanatical as Willy and as gullible as he was. And with Willy, these fellow believers wrathfully mount the ramparts against attack.

Happy speaks for all of them when he says that to come out the number-one man is the only dream. Well, this is just exactly *the* question: Is it the *ONLY* dream? Happy thinks it is. So did Willy. So did most of the playgoers. So do most of the readers. They may be uneasy about having Happy as their spokesman and might have put the matter less bluntly and trapped it up, no doubt, in a few miles of double talk. Yet Happy did preach their gospel.

The cruel question of faith runs square into all the Happys and generally glances off. Since the Happys are faithful, they cannot challenge their own faith or admit undermining doubts. They may be uneasy, but they mustn't let on that they are. They may have been entertaining blasphemous thoughts for a long time, but these remain private matters. A solid, bland, "happy," and forward-looking front is maintained for the public.

This play raises with unrelieved intensity the question of faith. It does this in a better fashion than any other modern play. It will never grow old until the faith that killed Willy Loman is itself dead. Candid readers must admit that in 1960 the wistful dreams harbored by Willy are very much alive. Thus we still have a hot play, even though it is eleven years old.

in "And Then" Understanding

A printed play, such as *Death of a Salesman*, can be treated like a novel, that is, read solely as a story. A plot is established, developed, and brought to a conclusion; the final curtain equals "The End." A very good play is very good literature and offers itself readily to this sort of treatment. But actually this is *mistreatment*, because a play is not a novel or even like a novel. Aside from stage directions and a few suggestions to the actors concerning gestures

The Informal Drama Group

If you want to study, discuss, and, then, possibly, act plays

- find a few other people who might be interested
- meet together and talk over plans
- choose a play
- and go to it.

Unless there is high-level professional competence in the group, don't attempt to produce plays for the public. Keep it informal.

In dealing with a play

- learn its plot
- discover the "real" characters beneath the characters
- improvise a few scenes
- act a few scenes
- discuss at all times what is going on in the play
- experiment

Some plays you might use for these informal purposes (available in local bookstores):

Six Great Modern Plays (Dell Publishing Co., Inc.; 75 cents).

Three Plays by Thornton Wilder (Bantam Books, Inc.; 50 cents). Included are: *The Matchmaker*, *Our Town*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

Patterns, by Rod Serling (Simon and Schuster, Inc., \$3.95). Included are four television plays: *Patterns*, *The Rack*, *Old MacDonald Had a Curve*, and *Requiem for a Heavyweight*.

The Modern Theatre: The American Drama (Vol. 4), edited by Eric Bentley (Doubleday Anchor Books; \$1.25).

and other stage business, a play is composed strictly of talk. Unlike a novel, a play has to end in a reasonable length of time and so must be tightly compressed. A play, in its essential nature, is intended to be read by the actors and *seen* by the audience. Thus, audiences who *read* the play are placed in the new role of actors—amateurs, naturally, but nonetheless actors. They cannot race through the story in order to find out how the thing ends. They have quite enough trouble determining how it should begin.

Plays, therefore, provide unique opportunities for study. An informal group that is interested in studying plays has to deal not only with the story but also with the acted play that brings the story to life. Reading and discussing the story furnishes a launching point for study of the acted play that takes place on a stage, with lights, music, costumes, speeches, cues, gestures, stage properties, sets, and so on. But knowing the story first becomes absolutely indispensable for knowing the play.

Using *Death of a Salesman* as an example, a group might think up a series of about twenty questions to ask and answer about the story. These questions would deal with the plain facts about what happened. Conceivably, ten to fifteen hours of actual discussion might be enough time for the group to get the facts thoroughly learned. Every person should know the whole story—from the moment Willy drops his sample cases on the kitchen floor to the very last scene at the cemetery with Happy following Biff and Linda off stage. Every person should be able to tell the story: “Willy did such and such, then Linda said so and so, and then they go” This “and then” understanding of the story is the necessary starting point for study of the play.

Fun Is Acting

After getting the story thoroughly in mind, an informal drama group must go on to get involved in the acted play itself. Now they are out of the realm of the studied word into the place of the acted word, where the printed word has to be spoken, translated into gestures, imaginatively presented so that people listening to the speech and watching the gestures get the point of what’s going on. For instance, Willy talks in many different ways. When he talks to his sons he is not the same Willy who talks to Linda or Charley or Ben. In Act One, Willy says:

WILLY: That’s just what I mean. Bernard can get the best marks in school, y’understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y’understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. That’s why I thank Almighty God you’re both built like Adonises. Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer. “Willy Loman is here!” That’s all they have to know, and I go right through.

How should this speech be given? Willy is expounding a fundamental doctrine of his faith. He is talking to his sons. He is also lying. What does he do with his hands? What do Biff and Happy do while Willy is talking? Where does the speech fit in the particular scene? What has just happened? What will shortly happen? After thinking over all these matters, the speech might then be acted.

But, obviously, an understanding of Willy Loman is at stake in any speech that is attempted. The same thing is true for every character in this play or in any other. What is Willy like? Or Linda? Or the boys? The best way to find out is to imagine a scene not in the play, a Sunday-afternoon scene, for instance, when the four central characters have just come home from a drive. What do they talk about? How do they talk? In this imaginary scene, people who act the

central characters are showing their understanding of the relationships that exist between the Lomans. This is a very good way to find out, among other things, that probably every person in the group has a special understanding of Willy, to say nothing of the other Lomans. Yet this is exactly where people begin to get into the play as a play. Willy has to be acted by a person who is not Willy. This person must pretend; and the quality of his “pretense” will depend a great deal upon how earnestly he has applied himself to the job of getting to know Willy.

Making the acquaintance of the characters by trying out random speeches and doing some imagined scenes is a sort of warm up for doing whole scenes of the play, such as the scene that ends the first act: Ben has just left, and Linda and Willy, and shortly Happy and Biff, are on stage together. (The scene begins when Linda says: “Willy, dear? Willy?” and Willy replies, “I was right!”)

This scene has an enormous dramatic impact that is largely due to the deceit and new hopefulness generated by the Lomans. The people who do this scene should be ready to take the wraps off and really act for those members of the group who are watching. The group members who take the roles become, for a while, the Lomans—in a theater, before an audience, trying to make a scene clear and compelling. The living room or kitchen or wherever the group meets to play the scene can be arranged so that there are make-believe stairs, a table, chairs, and a basement area. Each character will *read* his lines, of course, but the lines should be read for the benefit of the audience. After the scene has been played, it can be analyzed, evaluated, talked about, mistakes can be laughed about, and so on. Then the audience can become the actors, and the first actors can become the audience. More evaluation, laughter, analysis. More acting—until, finally, each member of the group will have some fundamental understanding of what Arthur Miller had in his head when he wrote the scene in just the way he did.

The bar scene (Act Two) or the Requiem at the close of the play also might be used for these purposes. The intricacies of moving, gesturing, facial expression, speaking, and listening become clear when interested people get together to act out a play. Acting may look perfectly easy to the audience; that is the way it should look. But when the audience itself starts to act, it then discovers the hard work and the extreme sensitivity that are required to make it “look” easy.

To Be Sensitive and Imaginative

At the end of Tennessee Williams’ play, *Sweet Bird of Youth*,² one of the characters turns to the audience and says:

(Continued on page 18)

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Shepherd or *Shepherd*?

By John W. Stettner

Not long ago I heard an interesting program on my car radio. The radio reporter was asking questions over the telephone, and the answers given by the listeners were also broadcast. The reporter noted that everywhere churches are expanding, with more people attending services than ever before. His question then was, "Are people getting better because of all this increased church activity?" The reporter at times threw in an extra question, such as, "Are ministers helping people become better people?" The answers varied a great deal. Some persons thought that churches and ministers are utterly ineffective, and that the world is going to pieces anyway. Others felt that the church and ministers are the last bulwark against evil forces in our society, but that they are fighting a losing battle. Not one person expressed unqualified confidence in the church or the ministry!

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The Christian Shepherd

This reaction is not in itself surprising, but it does reflect the prevailing confusion about the nature and task of the church and its ministry. To be sure, "the church" and "the ministry" are not synonymous terms. But they are obviously related, and confusion about one leads to confusion about the other. There is certainly no common agreement today about the kind of person the minister should be or what his task is. Pulpit committees, seeking pastors for their congregations, draw up long lists of qualifications that, in the end, are impossible to find in one man. Guilty parents want someone who is "good at working with youth." Someone else insists that the candidate be a "good Bible-centered" preacher. Another person declares that the church needs a pastor who will call regularly on all the members of the congregation. A successful salesman on the committee wants a minister who can relate well to businessmen—a "regular guy."

Such desires reflect more than individual prejudices;

they probably reflect what the persons involved feel is the essential nature and task of the ministry. And the situation is not much clearer among clergymen themselves, as several recent studies have shown. Some ministers feel they are primarily preachers, others counselors, others administrators, and so on. Many ministers feel that too much is expected of them, that they have too many different roles to play. A lot of attention might well be given, by laymen and clergy alike, to a better understanding of the multiple tasks of the minister, so that he can carry on a unified and integrated work that will be relevant to the times.

Seward Hiltner's book, *The Christian Shepherd* (Abingdon Press, 1959; \$3.00), can be a great help toward this end.¹ This book treats only one aspect of the problem, the minister's task of pastoral care. But it illustrates the minister's continuing effort to bring the gospel into dynamic relationship with the real needs of people. It is not simply a "how-to-do-it" book, nor is it a book of abstract theory unrelated to the realities of everyday life. Rather, it is a good example of the conviction that theory and practice should go hand in hand.

The Christian Shepherd does not purport to be an exhaustive treatment; one of Professor Hiltner's previous books, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Abingdon Press, 1958; \$4.00), is a major statement on the theory of pastoral care. In *The Christian Shepherd* there is only a brief recapitulation of that theory, the rest of the book being devoted to illustrating how the theory works out in various practical situations. There are, for example, chapters on pastoral care of grief situations, of the family, of "organization men," of rebels, and of housewives. Three other chapters have to do with the relation between pastoral care and the social class structure, the possibilities of pastoral care through fellowship groups, and how pastoral care is aided by an understanding of the developmental stages in life.

A Problem of Perspective

In these two books Dr. Hiltner brings order out of the confusion that abounds in at least one aspect of the minister's task, pastoral care, or "shepherding." But in *Preface to Pastoral Theology* a way is suggested for bringing order into other aspects of the minister's task—communicating the gospel and organizing the fellowship (the church). Preaching and shepherding are not therefore "categorically different types of activity." They are "ways of presenting the gospel to the needs of men . . . , taking into account different situations, occasions, times, and needs." Thus, the basic unity of the ministry is preserved, and the minister is mercifully spared from dividing (or multiplying) himself into three or more separate functionaries.

This threefold scheme of communicating, shepherding, and organizing is true to the Biblical witness and provides a clear and orderly way for the minister to

relate his work to the needs of men. Congregations, no less than ministers, become confused if they expect the minister to shepherd when he is preaching or to organize when he is shepherding. For that reason, *The Christian Shepherd* should be read by "the whole church." Congregations must know, just as the minister himself must know, from which perspective the minister is acting at any given point. If they know this, they will be saved from confusion as to what his proper role should be. When he is in the pulpit, his proper perspective is communicating; when he calls on a grief-stricken wife who has just lost her husband, his proper perspective is shepherding; when he is presiding over a session meeting, his proper perspective is organizing. In each of these roles, the minister will be sensitive to the needs of people, but he will respond differently, according to the kind of need he perceives existing.

When someone writes a book on the perspective of communicating the gospel, and someone writes one on the perspective of organizing the church, as Professor Hiltner has done on the perspective of shepherding, then the church will have a fairly complete description of the nature and task of the ministry.

Every Christian's Task

All that has been said so far points to the value of *The Christian Shepherd* in terms of clarifying and ordering our thinking about the shepherding perspective of the minister's task. This is the primary purpose of the book. But other readers will feel that this book has something to say to them personally. Persons caught in the toils of grief will feel that their suffering is understood as the author tries to instruct pastors on their shepherding role in this kind of situation. Members of families in which there is unhealthy tension and conflict may find helpful insights. So also with organization men and rebels.

"Shepherding," as used to describe pastoral care, is an ancient metaphor and is uniquely Christian. The crux of the metaphor is the shepherd's tender and solicitous care of his flock. But the metaphor does not extend to comparing people with sheep! Indeed, the outstanding thing about Hiltner's use of the metaphor is that people and their needs are taken seriously. They are human beings under God's care, not merely wiggling objects to be sheared, slaughtered, or otherwise "used." The author also points to the parable of the good Samaritan as a kind of model for the shepherding role; and this suggests that all men have a responsibility toward one another. After all, the professional religionists—the priest and the Levite—were the ones who passed by on the other side of the road. Hence, *The Christian Shepherd* should be instructive reading for all who call themselves "Christian."

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"IF THIS BE MARTYRDOM . . ."

By Frances W. Saunders

WHAT on earth is this I hear about your living in an integrated community? But I guess you had no choice." With these words, half indignant, half apologetic, my old college friend from Virginia greeted me. For ten years we had not seen each other. At the risk of ending a long and lovely friendship, I looked her in the eye and replied: "We are indeed living in an integrated development, and we had a choice. It's something we've been planning and working toward for four years."

I was prepared for any reaction from fainting to frowning. Instead, I was gratified to hear honest questions tumbling out: "Who planned it? What kind of people are they? How many Negro families are there? What kind of houses are there? What are your other neighbors like? Aren't you afraid of interracial marriage? Didn't the community oppose such a bold idea?" And on and on. . . .

Yes, it was a bold idea, so bold that when it was first proposed among a few people it was discussed with the caution of a miser making his will.

The Housing Group

In the fall of 1954, the Bulletin of the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton, New Jersey, one of three Presbyterian churches in our town of 25,000, carried a notice about a forthcoming meeting of the Men's Association. The announcement looked unexcitingly routine except for one thing—this was to be a joint meeting of the Men's Associations of the three Presbyterian churches. This meant that members from the predominantly Negro Witherspoon Church would be attending. No one will ever know whether this



fact kept any delicate church members away, nor will it ever be known how many new faces appeared, intrigued by the idea of discussing "Housing Problems in Princeton" in an interracial gathering. As a result of this tri-church meeting, a proposal was made: "Why don't we do something about it?" Thus, an event expected to be just another one of those lost-evening church meetings turned into a memorable occasion.

Calling itself simply "The Housing Group," what had started with a few Presbyterian men soon included persons from many facets of community life. There were no pompous statements of idealism, no formal organization (only a "convener"), no treasury (no money!)—but somehow the group moved on with a quiet and deep dedication to the single goal of helping promote equal housing opportunities for all in our town.

During the first two and a half years the Group assisted six Negro families to buy houses or lots of their choice. Efforts were then turned toward the possibility of a planned, integrated housing development. Someone had read that two Philadelphia men, Morris Milgram and George Otto, were building open-occupancy housing; so with dubious hope, members of the Group approached Mr. Milgram. Negotiations began immediately for building an integrated neighborhood to be patterned after his highly successful Concord Park in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where over a hundred families of Negroes and whites are living together happily.

In December, 1957, the town newspapers carried an official story on the Housing Group and, subsequently,

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the announcement of two sites on which were to be built planned, integrated developments totaling forty homes. In the summer of 1958 the first four families moved in.

Mending Bikes and Moving Furniture

Well, what kind of people *are* we? Since Princeton is an academic and research-centered community, our neighbors in the development are largely a professional group—engineers, two Presbyterian ministers, physicians, an architect, several teachers, psychologists, salesmen, merchants, Civil Service employees, a Boy Scout executive, and a social worker, in no particular order. Although more than a third of us happen to be Presbyterian, a number of faiths are represented: Methodist, Quaker, Unitarian, Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, and Ethical Culture. We are, on the average, about thirty-six years old, and all but three couples



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have children. So far there are ten Negro families out of forty. The houses range in price from \$17,000 to \$24,000 at Site A and from \$20,000 to \$40,000 at Site B.

These may be interesting statistics, but what really goes on in this unique community? We—the whites particularly—have been interviewed by sociology majors at Princeton University, by staff writers of several leading national magazines, and by curious acquaintances and well-meaning friends. We have had visits from politicians and State Department emissaries—though somehow Khrushchev's party missed us last year! Occasionally we feel like pottery on exhibition; but for the most part we are busy with such weighty problems as getting a stand of grass in the Small Boy Run, avoiding P.T.A. committees, keeping up with the ironing, trying out new dishes on company, washing the car, mowing the grass in the back yard where the children are supposed to play but don't, and watching the dog in tick season. Our sons all despise baths and haircuts, our daughters love lipstick, and the fathers to a man hate to mend bikes and move furniture.

Baseball Cards, Thermostats, and "The Question"

I wish there were some really dramatic anecdotes to tell about integrated living, for they would make for more sensational reporting. When our five-year-old son began to play with a new Negro neighbor's five-year-old daughter, they disagreed consistently on every point of activity for two solid days. Although it was grim in the beginning, no international incident developed, nor was the disagreement the slightest bit related to the color of their skins. It was simply

the meeting of two strong personalities, each of whom had previously been a leader in his own bailiwick. As suddenly as the clash began, it worked itself out, and rarely have there been two children with a healthier respect for each other.

One of the favorite friends of our eight-year-old son is a Negro boy his age—which again has nothing to do with anything more noble than common interests and quick minds. The two have no compunctions about calling each other a "dirty double-crossing pie-eyed snake-in-the-weeds" in the lovely lingo of eight-year-old boys, and in the next breath trading baseball cards with complete mutual trust.

We have a kindergarten car pool that includes a Negro mother; again no lofty gestures—just the plain economy of time and tires in getting our youngsters to school.

Two of us, by virtue of common political interests, gave a joint *Kaffeeeklatsch* for municipal candidates, but only the two of us knew that one had an embarrassing lack of chairs while the other suffered from a drastic shortage of cups. We borrow sugar, lemons, soap powder, straight pins, shoe polish, and salad dressing back and forth regularly. It doesn't matter to any of us whether it is from the white neighbor on one side or from the Negro neighbor on the other. What does count is who has that cup of sugar when your cannister has only an ant left in it.

Some kind friends and relatives feared we might be socially ostracized, but we can assure them that never before have we had such a steady stream of guests! A fairly healthy mixture of coincidence, curiosity, and need for companionship all add up to much worth-while talk and considerable coffee. A few visitors imply that they think we are to be commended in our martyrdom. They show surprise that our rooms are not cubicles, our beds are not made of nails, our chicken soup has real meat in it, and the thermostat is set above 70°F. These same dubious persons expect to see quantities of Negro children seething in our midst. The facts are that two out of the three childless families are Negro, a Negro couple with one child would like desperately to have more, and no Negro family has more than three offspring.

One final query never fails to come up. We now call it The Question: "Aren't you afraid of interracial marriage?" The answer is emphatically "No," and for two simple reasons:

First, our Negro friends do not desire intermarriage any more than we do and perhaps less—contrary to rampant hearsay. One Negro father stated with considerable feeling that he did not want his highly intelligent teen-age daughter to attend a Northern college simply because she would not have a wide choice of suitable young Negro men on her educational level.

Secondly, in this age of mobility the chances are ridiculously slim that any two children in one neighborhood—whether integrated or not—will stay in the

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Keys to the City

By Woodbridge Marshall

THAT mid-century phenomenon called the 'exploding metropolis' has given the city planner a new prominence and his job a new urgency," states the lead sentence of a recent employment service occupational guide.

Most people are seeing their home towns or their adopted cities "exploding." New suburbs and housing developments spring out of nowhere time and again. But what is this city-planning business? Is it something new under the sun? How does it work, and who are the city planners? What have they been doing all this time? What sort of shape are we in, anyway, and what reason have you or I to be concerned about city planning?

As Old as the (Man-made) Hills

City planning stems from a long tradition, with projects dating all the way from legendary times to the day when your own neighborhood was laid out complete with its "planned" residential areas, shopping center, school, and park. However, a "new urgency" in city planning does exist, just as surely as the fact that you were late getting home from work the other day because of a rush-hour jam on that brand-new freeway, or that your kids went on double session this fall because of overcrowding in your fine new school, or that the countryside which you moved out of the city to be near has been covered over by more streets and houses like your own. Today's problems in city planning are not just for the experts, but are for all of us to solve—and only with the help and understanding of all can the full potential of our cities, through planning, be realized.

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A restoration of part of Babylon and the 300-foot high Tower of Babel. The tower was begun in the third millennium B.C. but not finished until Nebuchadnezzar's reign. A portion of the enormous city walls, built by Nebuchadnezzar about 600 B.C., ran along the Euphrates River, which bordered Babylon on the west side.

Of course, city planning has been with us for a long time. Legend would have it that Babylon, with its fortifications and hanging gardens, was planned by Nebuchadnezzar to be a city having no rival for security, magnificence, or urban attraction. More factually, we can cite the history of ancient Athens. About 460 B.C., Themistocles is understood to have employed planning consultants to relate the development of the city to its rising status as a world power. A planned expansion program was carried out, extending the boundaries of the city five miles in order to bring Piraeus within the fortified limits and make the former provincial town of Athens a seaport in its own right. In Rome, one of the forums has been identified not only as the enlargement of Rome's civic center and the construction of an imposing public monument, but also as an early day "slum clearance



project," helping to remove the blight of overcrowding, fire hazard, and narrow streets from the imperial city's central core. We know well the stories of medieval cathedral towns, of Sir Christopher Wren's plan for rebuilding London after the fire of 1666, of Baron Georges Haussmann's boulevards that were cut through the heart of Paris in the nineteenth century.

In America, the New England town, with its cluster of homes and public buildings grouped around an open "green," represents a practical city plan we find most appealing even today—especially when shown on a Christmas card or a New Year's calendar. Our national history contains the excitement of building a completely new city on the banks of the Potomac. Major Pierre L'Enfant's plan, patterned in large measure after the grandeur of Paris, established the essential form of Washington, D.C., crosslaced by tree-lined boulevards whose every major intersection was reserved for a square, a park, or a public building.

"O Beautiful for Spacious . . ."

Much of the modern-day popular concern with city planning in America no doubt stems from the influence of the great Chicago world's fair of 1893. Here, in the heart of the brash young industrial and mercantile city that considered itself the center of the universe, was presented beauty and order in the grand manner: imposing buildings, with facades according to the classical orders, dramatically set off by open squares, pools, fountains, and boulevards. The lesson was not lost upon the thousands who saw the exposition, and a "city beautiful" era of planning was soon under way. Not many years later, a civic-minded group privately subscribed to the cost of preparing a plan to "make Chicago the most beautiful city in the world." The published document, over the signature of its maker, the architect Daniel Burnham, contains the oft-quoted appeal: "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood."

Another planning movement of the early 1900's received expression in England with the publication of Ebenezer Howard's booklet *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. The ugliness, confusion, overcrowding, and dreariness of the nineteenth-century industrial city was to be countered by the ideal of setting homes and places of employment within a "garden" framework, controlled in optimum size, and set apart from the next community by open green space or agricultural "greenbelt." Welwyn near London, Radburn in New Jersey, Greenbelt in Maryland, and Baldwin Hills Village near Los Angeles all exemplify this "garden city" concept of planning.

In the 1920's, what has been called the "city practical" influence came to the fore. Planners directed their efforts to solving problems of utility service, engineering, and transportation in a time of technical advance. Then in the '30s, when social problems became a national concern, city planning took on a broader field, concerned especially with the environ-

ment in which people lived. Problems of public housing and slum clearance engaged the attention of planners, to be intensified later in the war years by accelerated programs for national defense. In the postwar years, we have seen and have played our own parts in the baby boom and building boom, the unprecedented magnitude of which is the prime ingredient for this "metropolitan explosion" that confronts us today.

The General Plan

But who are the planners, and how do they work? Although until fairly recent times the practitioners of planning have largely been trained as architects, landscape architects, economists, attorneys, or engineers, the field is gradually coming to be recognized as one having its own specialized line of study. Commencing with Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the '20s, there are now almost a dozen universities that offer a specialized curriculum in city planning, most frequently a two- or three-year graduate program leading to the degree of Master of City Planning.

The focus of attention in planning practice is centered upon preparation of a "Master Plan," and the process involves: (1) research and analysis of present conditions and future trends, (2) determination of goals and objectives, (3) preparation of the Master Plan, and (4) implementation of the plan through such means as subdivision control, land-use zoning, and public-improvement programs for highways, utilities, schools, parks, and the like. Present-day planners prefer to label their production "The General Plan" (or if they are long-winded, "The Long-Range General Plan for Future Physical Development"), which emphasizes that this plan is primarily a statement of policy about community objectives, a guideline pointing the way toward desirable future development and concerned with the "big picture" of the physical pattern of the community—the relative location and extent of its residential, commercial, and industrial areas, the transportation network necessary to hold these areas together, and the need for schools, recreation, and open space that must be supplied to make it all work.

From this view of planning methods, it follows directly that the planners are neither the ones who decide what the "big picture" is to be nor the ones who bring the provisions of the General Plan into actual being. Planning is a public process; and in our democratic way of doing things, community decisions are arrived at by the citizens of the community themselves, through their elected representatives in councils or boards of supervisors. The function of the planner then, in this decision-making process, is to bring his training and experience to bear so that planning problems are clearly recognized, so that alternative solutions are posed and their implications fully explored, and so that the decisions on any one aspect of development can be made with full under-

standing of their interrelationship with the other aspects of the "big picture" and the community's highest potential.

As to carrying the plan into effect, that job is finally done by the people of the community themselves, through the manner in which private and public funds are invested in the development of land—the building of houses, stores, factories, roads, schools, and parks. That is, the planning and development of the future pattern of a community is really made up of the sum of all the separate "planning" decisions of each citizen in buying or selling property, building new buildings, tearing down and replacing outmoded structures, expanding plant facilities here, establishing new functions there, authorizing public developments through bond issues, construction programs, and the like. If we see that "city planning" is in reality brought about by all of us, then the educational, public-relations, informational aspect of a planning program in the community is brought into clear focus. The extent to which the whole community can become involved in the planning process can be an index of the success to be achieved.

Paradise Lost

What then is the metropolitan explosion, and what is our city-planning crisis? Statistically, it is a three-way jam made up equally of soaring population totals, the accelerated movement of population to the great metropolitan centers, and the mounting pressure for single-family home ownership or "suburban" environment. When the cumulative effect of these three factors is brought to bear at one time and place upon the single resource of land, the explosive nature of today's metropolitan sprawl—"subtopia" it has been called—and the planning problems it unfolds are apparent.

Take the example of Santa Clara County, southernmost of the nine counties fronting on San Francisco Bay. From the earliest days of California's history, the two hundred square miles of Santa Clara County's valley floor have been considered an agricultural paradise. It is one of the top ten agricultural producing counties in the whole United States. Its ideal combination of deep soil, adequate water supply, drainage, and temperate climate have served to produce annually nearly a hundred million dollars' worth of orchard and row crops, including prunes, cherries, pears, apricots, walnuts, grapes, strawberries, vegetables, and flowers. Local boast would have it that one out of every two prunes marketed in the whole world comes from Santa Clara County!

In 1940 it could truly be described as a garden spot, a green expanse of fields and orchards within which lay seven well-defined cities, each having roughly 4,000 to 8,000 persons, except for the county seat of nearly 50,000 population. Palo Alto, with Stanford University, was a culturally oriented community; Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and Gilroy

were agricultural service centers; Los Gatos was a sort of foothill resort community; and San José was the center of the economic structure, its industry directed toward canning and distributing the perishable fresh-fruit crops. It was a prosperous valley being used at an optimum. It had no bonded indebtedness; its schools were administered in the main by a number of rural districts, many having no more than one school; it was tied together by an adequate network of farm-to-market roads.

What has happened since 1940? Well, Santa Clara County lies just forty-five miles from both San Francisco and Oakland, the central cities of the "metropolitan" region, and the bulldozers have arrived from both directions! An old resident wouldn't recognize the place. There are ten new cities, 450,000 more people, and 150,000 new houses. There are factories, shopping centers, schools, hospitals, churches, and highways spread out relentlessly over the countryside. Thirty thousand acres of the richest crop-producing soil in the world have been taken over for this urban expansion. And what pattern has been made? Speculation and jurisdictional competition have produced a disorder in which not a single square mile of the two hundred in the valley floor is without its subdivision. Major industries employing thousands are situated at accident-prone intersections. Highways to bypass communities have become centers of communities themselves; land values have doubled, trebled, and doubled again. Roads through once quiet rural



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areas are choked with bumper-to-bumper commuter traffic. The business life in historic "downtown" locations has been siphoned off to new "regional" shopping centers where crop pickers were at work a scant two years ago. Santa Clara County has gone into debt with thirty million dollars in public-improvement bonds; other millions have been pledged in order to build 150 new schools. A half-billion-dollar road deficiency is reported in a recent comprehensive survey.

Does all this add up to progress, or is it folly? It would make a good debate; but while the rhetoric is flowing, we can report that in every ninety minutes one acre of agricultural land is being transferred to urban uses, in every sixty minutes two new families come to reside here, every day one new elementary school classroom is needed!

Keys to the City

Granted this explosion, what, then, can be isolated as America's most pressing planning problem? Some would say it is *metropolitan co-ordination*—having the objective of bringing about at the level of an entire metropolitan area the ability to study, plan, and

direct future development on a comprehensive, rather than a piecemeal, basis. The Boston metropolitan area has sixty cities; Los Angeles is one county with ninety cities; the San Francisco Bay area has nine counties and seventy-two cities. This pattern is being repeated again and again—evidence enough to show that co-ordination of planning is needed and is the most logical of functions to begin on. So-called “home rule” may be all very well in its proper place, where there is a single city in a large area, but as soon as one city’s legal limits touch those of another, something of this historic absolute authority is lost. In the metropolitan community’s interest, a roadway cannot be allowed to come to one city’s limits and not match with the corresponding road in the next or to terminate completely! Land uses on one side of the line between two cities should not be permitted to downgrade established uses on the other side of the line. Yet here lies the paradox, for in many instances suburban cities have been formed precisely for planning purposes, for the ability to guide and control one’s own future development pattern, and to guide it better than, or at least differently from, those bums next door! The point here is not to advocate either metropolitan supergovernment or the abolition of cities. By all means, local affairs should be locally decided. Yet this may even be the clue. Perhaps we must look forward to a functional separation of planning responsibilities so that truly local planning remains a local feature while those aspects of development which have metropolitan-wide scope—transportation, recreation, air pollution, water supply, and sewage treatment, to name a few—yield to some kind of metropolitan co-ordination.

Others say that *urban renewal*—rehabilitation of the central core, revitalization of “downtown,” or

whatever you wish to name it—is our most pressing problem. Planners register some pride in having contributed to the growing theory and practice of “redevelopment,” but also show some dismay at the increasing tally of complexities, false starts, and delays-to-accomplishment that have come out in ten years of public experience in this field. Nevertheless, the health of the whole metropolitan body depends upon the healthy functioning of its downtown heart; and slums, traffic strangulation, obsolescence, confusion, ugliness, and economic cross-purposes call for new schemes, new ideas, and new medicines.

Perhaps the most dramatic planning problem now seen to be arising from the metropolitan explosion is *the preservation of open space* and the conservation of agriculture. Are we to have a continuous “city” from Boston all the way to Washington, D.C.? Have the fringes of Chicago already come in contact with those of Milwaukee and South Bend? Has “Los Angeles” reached its final limit at the Mexican border? Is California truly to have forty million people by the year 2000—and not a single grape, orange, or prune?

Our fine agricultural soils are a natural resource just as important as air and water, yet in this land of abundance we have squandered all three, and metropolitan expansion is contributing to the toll. The air is polluted by heavy concentrations of people and machines in tightly knit urban patterns; water is polluted by the waste of millions being inadequately disposed of; prime soil is overrun by uncontrolled urban growth at the same time that the need for greenery, open space, and visual relief is being intensified. What can we do in a situation like this, where the problem is so lately seen and the force of the juggernaut so irresistible?

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Only two years ago all you could see here was a prune orchard.

CAN THE CHURCHES BE SILENT?

By Clifford Earle

IT MAY come as a surprise to some readers to learn that The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. maintains an office in Washington. This office, which is related to the church's Department of Social Education and Action, symbolizes and expresses the concern of the church with the affairs of government and with American political life.

Separation of Church and State

The existence of the Washington office raises the question of church-state relations. The idea that church and state should be kept apart is a good American tradition, but it does not mean that there should be such an absolute wall of separation that conversation between the two is not possible. It has never meant that churches should not seek to influence the policies of Government.

Nearly all the principal church bodies in the United States "speak" on public questions and from time to time seek to affect the formation of public policies. The differences that exist among the churches in their views of the separation of church and state are not reflected in the fact that some do a great deal and some do nothing to influence national legislation, but are reflected in the kinds of social issues with which they are concerned in approaches to Government.

Some church bodies seem to be interested primarily or solely in the issue of religious freedom. Others are concerned with particular issues, such as temperance or pacifism, that have a bearing upon particular denominational traditions. Still others are politically active with reference to the whole gamut of issues affecting the public interest or the common good.

A good deal is said about keeping the churches out of politics. It should be recognized that this kind of talk is generally inspired not by theoretical or theological considerations but by fear of what the churches may say or do in the political field. Sometimes the churches are criticized (usually by some of their own members) for "intermeddling in civil affairs" when the real difficulty is a sharp disagreement over a political issue.

For a church to be always silent about governmental decisions and actions on the false grounds that the church must stay out of politics is a version of *laissez-faire* and is to be as strongly discredited here as in the realm of economics.

It should be noted that the legislative and executive branches of the Government encourage and often seek the expression of "the mind of the churches" on politics and proposals that have social and moral implications. Sometimes social-action units of the churches are invited to submit testimony in public hearings on important questions before the Senate and the House of Representatives. Indeed, committees of Congress have been known to set up hearings for the express purpose of receiving testimony from the churches. From time to time, departments of Government, such as the Department of State, arrange one- or two-day consultations in which church bodies and other nongovernmental organizations have an opportunity to discuss important questions with the policy makers of our Government.

The activities of the National Council of Churches in behalf of congressional support of economic and technical assistance for the newly developing countries of Asia and Africa is an example of responsible church-state relations in the best American tradition. Another example is the work done by the Washington office of the National Council of Churches and similar offices maintained by several church bodies, including our own. These offices are not lobbies but are information centers and clearinghouses on legislative issues in which the churches are interested.

How the Churches Work

The representatives of the churches working in Washington on political matters consult with one another constantly and co-operate in many projects, usually under the aegis of the Washington office of the National Council of Churches. The Society of Friends, for example, with its special interest in disarmament and the military establishment, keeps the other church bodies informed from day to day concerning developments in these issues. Likewise, the Lutheran representatives, who are interested deeply in refugee and immigration problems, keep their fel-

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low workers abreast of the latest on these. The truth is that Government is so big an operation, and the issues are so many, that no one church office can do anything like an adequate job in dealing with the whole range of issues with which the churches feel they ought to be concerned. By means of informal teamwork they are able to be fairly effective, at least in the matter of gathering information about what is happening in Congress and in the departments and agencies of Government.

The Washington staffs of the co-operating churches unite their efforts in several significant projects. One is an annual churchman's seminar, which is designed to deal with a variety of current issues and which serves as a model for citizenship seminars arranged and sponsored by the particular church bodies. Another co-operative project is the tabulating and publishing of a voting record of members of the House



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and Senate on key issues in which the churches are concerned. This voting record is widely distributed through the constituencies of the co-operating church groups.

The director of the Washington office of the Department of Social Education and Action of The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is Miss Helen Lineweaver, a capable and experienced student and interpreter of public affairs. It should definitely be noted that Miss Lineweaver is not a registered lobbyist, nor does she function as a lobbyist for the United Presbyterian Church or for any other group. Rather, Miss Lineweaver observes, analyzes, and interprets issues and developments on the national scene, and transmits the information to the appropriate offices in the boards and agencies of the church. From time to time she is able to arrange consultations and briefings at which the leaders of the church may discuss matters of mutual interest with leaders of Government. She gives special attention to the issues in which the church is interested by virtue of General Assembly pronouncements. She makes arrangements for church representatives to present testimony to congressional committees when that is desirable.

Miss Lineweaver also assists in arranging and leading Washington seminars for church groups. There are a growing number of such seminars every year. The Department of Social Education and Action sponsors several of them; other seminars are sponsored by synods or presbyteries or even local churches.

Direct Action Versus Indirect Action

The work of the Washington office raises the question of the extent to which the church should engage in direct action in attempting to affect public policies.

By direct action we mean:

1. Resolutions on public issues by the judicatories of the church, principally the General Assembly, that are brought to the attention of appropriate leaders of the legislative and executive branches of the Government.

2. Testimony before congressional committees, either by means of prepared statements sent to the committees or by personal appearances by representative church leaders.

3. Informal approaches to members of Government by church leaders.

4. Soliciting or encouraging various kinds of "grass-roots" action, such as conversations with legislators during congressional recesses, letters to congressmen, resolutions by local judicatories.

The church bears an indirect influence upon Government programs and policies by means of:

1. The long-term influences of the church on the spirit, the morale, the value system of the community.

2. The influence of the church's own effort to maintain freedom in its witness to the gospel, which often helps to keep the door open for expression of freedom in other aspects of public life.

3. The teaching of the members of the church about the meaning of the Christian faith and its implications for the great public issues of our time, and the encouragement of their concern with public issues.

In his splendid book, *Christians and the State* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958; \$4.50), Dr. John C. Bennett suggests that the distinction between direct action and indirect action by the churches is not an absolute one. As we move toward a more direct form of action, he says, the emphasis is upon decisions that are made by official church bodies for the purpose of influencing public policies either through public opinion or through direct approaches to the agencies of Government. Dr. Bennett goes on to emphasize that the indirect forms of action are usually more significant and important than direct action on the part of the churches. He suggests that if direct action is not a kind of overflow from indirect action, it is artificial and does not represent the kind of consensus that justifies the action.

Whatever may be anyone's judgment about the relative importance of these forms of direct action, the churches of the United States will insist on them from time to time. Their effectiveness depends somewhat upon the way in which they are used. If the churches were to act and speak too often, there would be diminishing returns. But if the churches never acted or spoke directly, this could be interpreted as a sign, not of constraint, but of their not caring enough.

The church's activity in the political field is limited by its own nature. Although the church can hardly help being deeply concerned about public issues and



The National Capitol, Washington, D. C.

true to itself when it seeks to do something about them, its vocation is not political action. It is not at all like a political party or like the League of Women Voters, both of which are concerned primarily with politics. What the church does in seeking to influence public policies must be consistent with its own purpose, and that goes far beyond politics.

This suggests the importance of certain guiding principles of a general nature:

1. The church is most faithful to its own nature when it acts not on the basis of institutional self-interest but for the welfare of persons outside its own organic life. Indeed, this explains the respect often given to the church's petitions—it seeks not to enhance its own life but to serve the common good. There may be occasions when the church must resist public policies that curtail the free exercise of religion. But the church is untrue to itself and is not acting like a church when it seeks any kind of secular advantage by political action.

2. The church should be sure that the public policies it encourages and supports are valid on generally accepted grounds. It is improper for the church to seek to force on the public a pattern of behavior based on a point of view that is unique to itself. The church may encourage among its own members a style of life, setting up standards of behavior that exemplify its own teaching and tradition, but it has no right to require people outside its life to conform to these standards. This principle has a direct bearing on the

approach of the churches to such colloquial “issues” as Sabbath observance, birth control, Bible-reading in public schools, the use of alcoholic beverages, and pacifism.

3. The church should recognize that its main contribution to the formation of public policies is in the area of moral judgment. Here the church may be expected to have unusual sensitiveness and insight. In the realm of strategic judgments, however, the church had better turn to experts—mostly persons in public service and in the academic disciplines who have a working knowledge of the problems and needs. For example, it is appropriate for the church to urge the importance of technical assistance in our relations with certain other countries. When it comes to saying specifically what kind and how much, the church has very little competence. Here the economists and technicians and other specialists have a deeper understanding.

4. In seeking to influence legislation, the church is well advised to use the political potential of its own membership rather than “professional” lobbyists. Indeed, a church body with a constituency does not need to lobby. It can be much more effective working through social-action leaders and groups in local congregations.

In all that we have been saying, the assumption is that the church has a duty, under God, to speak corporately and decisively to the centers of power and decision-making in public affairs.

"SO ATTENTION MUST BE PAID"

(Continued from page 6)

"I don't ask for your pity, but just for your understanding—not even that—no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all!"

Playwrights seldom make such a direct appeal to the audience, but they are constantly making indirect appeals of this nature. By coming into contact with a play, audiences or readers or informal actors are opened up, at times quite explosively. They are exposed to people and situations and views of life. They are made vulnerable to emotions they might not want to feel; they are encouraged to be sensitive and imaginative about the lives they are living every day.

No special plea is being made here for the church to get into the drama business. We do, however, have good reason to hope that *when* and *if* plays are studied as plays, the students will be more willing and able to give attention to the Willys in their own lives who, too often, are given the cold shoulder and the deaf ear. In a time such as ours that is no little hope, because, really, attention must be paid.

KEYS TO THE CITY

(Continued from page 14)

Turn to Santa Clara County once more, where primitive attempts are being made to reverse the trend. Suppose that the planning objective is to set aside a permanent area for agriculture on some of the finest land. Why should this be attempted? For two purposes: first, to conserve some agriculture as a prime economic asset; and secondly, to organize the urban pattern in a way that will contain communities, thereby preserving their identities through separating them from one another with open green space. In the past six years several steps have been taken in the direction of this goal:

1. In 1953 an *Exclusive Agricultural* classification was established as a part of the County Zoning Ordinance.

2. In 1955 the California Legislature adopted an *Agricultural Exclusion Act*, exempting agriculturally zoned land from annexation to a city without the owner's consent.

3. In 1957 the state legislature went farther and instructed assessors *to assess* land zoned and used exclusively for agriculture solely for its value in such agricultural use.

As a result of these three steps, about 50,000 acres of land in Santa Clara County are zoned "exclusively for agriculture," and more land is being zoned this way each month. This could be just the sort of start

needed to assure the continuation of an efficient agricultural unit, capable of balancing the "metropolitan" economy and providing open-space form as well. Most recently, the 1959 legislature passed an *Open Spaces Act*, having been spurred on by outcries when a highway project destroyed a beautiful pine grove opposite the entrance to Monterey Peninsula's famed 17 Mile Drive. The Open Spaces Act enables cities or counties to acquire property by various means in order to conserve its natural scenic, economic, or open-space value to the community.

Justice William O. Douglas, in a historic opinion validating the District of Columbia redevelopment laws, has stated: "The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled." The planning problems in America are complex and compounded of many factors. More attention, new probes, and bolder experiments are needed if we are to realize the full capacity of our new metropolitan areas.

"IF THIS BE MARTYRDOM . . ."

(Continued from page 10)

same houses for twenty years and grow up to marry. Young people today almost never marry the girl or the boy next door. If marriage between white and Negro young people is so objectionable, this should be the better realized through enlightened and normal association. It can hardly be other than a losing battle to fight something one knows little or nothing about.

To Saints and Sinners Alike

Although Princeton is distinctive in many ways, it cannot claim to be free of prejudice. There has not been any lawlessness or panic-selling directed toward our integrated neighborhoods, but there have been expressions of concern and some angry outbursts. For the most part, these have been open and reasonably courteous. Even the person most violently opposed to integrated living would have to admit in all fairness that the houses in our neighborhood have upgraded the general area. Moreover, there has not been a single instance of lowered property values in the areas in which the Group helped the original six Negroes to buy homes, and, indeed, in one section lots have almost doubled in price over a two-year period.

Whatever these statements may or may not prove, one thing is certain: We who live here enjoy our neighbors tremendously, and if this be martyrdom, we highly recommend it to saints and sinners alike.



NOTES for Program Planning

THE three program articles in each issue of CROSSROADS have a double purpose. First, they present topics of general interest to individual readers who receive CROSSROADS by single subscription or as members of church school classes and adult study groups.

The second purpose of the program articles is to make available to monthly groups resource materials that are brief enough to be utilized in some way during a single meeting.

The program articles are developed around a general theme throughout the year. However, there is no attempt to present here a tightly knit series of lessons. Usually it is not necessary to use "all or none" of the program articles, nor must your group feel obliged to use them in the order presented in the magazine. You are free to select and use the program articles when, as, and if your group members wish to get into the subjects that are opened up in the articles.

The three program articles in this issue may not appear immediately to be related. Indeed, the subjects are different—"integrated" living, city planning, and the church's influence on public issues and Government policy. But the same concern underlies all three: Church members are called to participate intelligently in the public affairs of the community from neighborhood to nation.

Preparing to Present the Topic

Except on very rare occasions when something cataclysmic has just happened, a group's program must be carefully planned and prepared in advance. Several weeks before a particular meeting is to take place, a committee should be given the task of planning the presentation of the chosen topic. The committee should do several things:

1. If the topic for the meeting is related to one of the program articles in CROSSROADS, every member of the committee should study the article to discover the issues, likely questions, points needing further clarification, etc.

2. The chairman of the planning committee should work with the pastor to locate, if possible, a qualified resource adviser from the area and invite him to work with the planning committee. For the subjects of residential desegregation or the church and public policy, you may obtain significant resource leadership from the local council of churches or from your presbytery's committee on social education and action. On city planning, the local planning commission will be able to suggest a resource adviser. The committee

should work closely with the resource adviser, but don't expect him to do your work for you.

3. Then the committee should meet to discuss the subject, to clarify the issues involved as the committee members see them and with the help of the resource adviser, to state the major questions or problems about the subject *with reference to your own locality*.

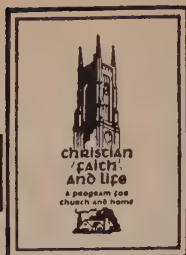
4. On the basis of this preliminary review, the committee should formulate the goal they hope to reach by presenting the subject to the group. Why bring up the subject? What might you reasonably expect to accomplish? Try to state your goal briefly.

5. Having set the goal, the committee must decide how to present the subject in order to accomplish it. Review *Handbook for Presbyterian Adult Groups* (order from Presbyterian Distribution Service; price, 50 cents), Ch. IV, Section 6, pages 31-34. This section describes the use of several methods—lecture, symposium, panel, debate, discussion, buzz groups, role-playing, films, play-reading, and other possibilities. If you usually have thirty or more in attendance, your planning committee will find valuable help in the Adult Leadership Leaflet, *Planning and Leading Large Meetings* (order from Presbyterian Distribution Service; price, 15 cents).

6. Next, the committee should make all the necessary arrangements for the presentation. You may decide to present the subject yourselves or invite others in the group or community to take the leadership. In any case, work with those who actually are to bring the topic before the group. Don't dump it in their laps and walk away.

7. Finally, the committee should evaluate the meeting. Consider to what extent the goal you set was reached, whether the methods used to present the subject were adequate to capture the group's real attention, interest, and response, and what, if anything, the group might wish to take up in terms of further study, discussion, or project activity.

Presbyterian Distribution Service is an agency of our church to which is assigned the duty of distributing program materials created by all its boards and agencies (promotional leaflets, guides and manuals, audio-visuals, etc.). Send orders or inquiries for information to the center nearest you: Presbyterian Distribution Service, 225 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y.; 416 South Franklin Street, Chicago 7, Ill.; 234 McAllister Street, San Francisco 2, Calif.



THEME FOR THE YEAR : *Jesus Christ Is Lord*



Unit I

How to Understand the Fourth Gospel

By Norman F. Langford

Editor in Chief of the *Christian Faith and Life* Curriculum

JOHN, *by El Greco*

WHAT WE SHALL ATTEMPT TO DO

WE ARE about to begin fifteen studies in The Gospel According to John. Fifteen weeks are clearly too short a time in which to deal adequately with one of the great books of the Bible. We shall not, therefore, attempt to cover the entire Fourth Gospel, but shall confine ourselves to the first fourteen chapters.

Instead of trying to work our way through the whole book, we have selected a portion of John for our study. Even for this *part* of the Gospel (fourteen chapters), fifteen weeks are obviously not enough, but we may succeed in following certain clues that will help us to understand the Gospel as a whole. Our method will not be to take a chapter a week, but to take certain significant portions of *chs. 1 to 14*, covering this ground

as carefully as we can in the time allotted, and hoping that our method of study will reveal the main themes developed by John. To go from the beginning of the book to the end of *ch. 14* means that we shall look at the Gospel from the prologue, as the logical starting point, and conclude where Jesus has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, as described by John, would constitute a large study in itself. We are by no means ignoring Jesus' death and resurrection, however, for (as we shall see) these events were foreshadowed by many words and deeds of Jesus. One of the most striking facts about the Fourth Gospel is the way in which, from the very outset, there are hints, growing in intensity, as to what is

to come at the end of Jesus' earthly career. Rejection, death, resurrection, eternal life—these themes are written into practically every verse of John.

That is why we venture to call this course "How to understand the Fourth Gospel." Learning how to pick up these clues and following the trail that leads inevitably to the outcome of Jesus' life is the purpose of these studies. In that way we may equip ourselves to read everything in John intelligently and sensitively. This, let it be repeated, is an exercise in understanding, not an attempt to cover a major book of the Bible from beginning to end.

Authorship and date of writing will be of no concern to us. As a matter of fact, it would be impossible to dogmatize about these things. Some scholars think that John was written very late, and some have re-

cently come to the conclusion that it was written very early. If it was written late, and keeping in mind the style of writing, it would not seem probable that it came directly from the hand of the apostle John; and the book itself does not make such a claim. On the other hand, there is reason to suppose that it did come from a tradition provided by the apostle John, and was written possibly by another person.

Whoever wrote it, and whenever it was written, it is a masterpiece that demands the most careful examination. Every page is full of double meanings—words that have their literal meaning and yet point to deeper matters beyond a literal sense. To learn how to discern these complexities and these subtleties will be our aim as we undertake the study of the larger portion of this wondrous book.

1

JOHN—GOSPEL OF ACTION

Read *John 1: 1-18*.

THE Gospel According to John is built around the mighty deeds of Christ, and not, as might appear, around long speeches.

Lengthy discourses and arguments take up most of the space in this Gospel. Accounts of what Jesus actually did are less prominent than in the other three Gospels. Of all the Gospels this one seems the least apt candidate for the title "The Gospel of Action." Yet the first fourteen chapters have a definite plot, and this plot has for its backbone certain acts of Jesus.

The miracles are the chief acts of Jesus. They are the changing of water into wine, the healing of the official's son, the healing of the man beside the pool, the feeding of the multitude, the restoration of sight to the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. These are not introduced haphazardly. Except for the first two, they all provoke a great deal of controversy about who Jesus is and by what right he performs his miracles in the way he chooses to do.

The lengthy discourses that we encounter arise in large part from the controversy caused by his acts. The dispute grows ever more severe and intensive, until, as we shall clearly see later on, the raising of Lazarus leads directly to Christ's own death—and to the greatest of miracles, which is Jesus' resurrection. By keeping these great deeds in mind, these events which call forth many words both on the part of Jesus and of his enemies, we can most easily follow the plot of the Fourth Gospel.

The words are not just words; they, too, are events. When Jesus performs one of his great miracles, the controversial words surrounding the action are also very eventful. What is *said* in a situation of crisis is action and leads on to further events. Thus, for the

sake of following the story, it is well to keep in mind the succession of miracles—each one demanding, in an exciting way, that something further must happen.

The Event That Leads to Actions

All these spectacular actions, and the ensuing controversies, spring from the one great event discussed in the prologue (*John 1: 1-18*). This primary event is the incarnation—God become flesh in Jesus of Nazareth.

The author deliberately chose to express the incarnation in terms of what he calls "the Word." The Son of God was a flesh-and-blood man. He was born a baby, not a word. Do we, then, find John's way of reference ("the Word") abstract and philosophical?

What is the relationship between a *word* and a *deed*? They are not so easy to distinguish as we might suppose, and we should not be contemptuous of what we call "mere words." John starts by saying, "In the beginning was the Word . . ." This is not the same at all as saying, "In the beginning was an idea," or "reason," or "a divine Mind." In the Bible, God's speech is the same thing as his action. We might say that *God acts by speaking*.

Even with our human words this is to some degree true. Once we have said something, even something trivial, we become responsible for some sort of event. Life will never again be quite the same as if we had never uttered those words. We have asserted ourselves—to command, to invite, to rebuke, to apologize, to praise, to cause something to be done. We have, at the least, expressed our own opinion, which will probably have some impact, for good or ill, on others. What must it mean, then, for God to speak?

When John begins to write of an eternal Word of God, his message is strikingly like the opening of

Genesis, which certainly is concerned with action. There God spoke, and creation sprang into being. Now he speaks again, this time to redeem what he created. Between creation and the coming of Jesus, God continually had something to say. Through prophets who said, "Thus saith the Lord," God spoke to Israel, and his speech had grave consequences. The writer of Hebrews connects up all of God's speaking in the opening verses of his book: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (*Heb. 1: 1-2*).

The beginning of John has still other similarities to Genesis. We hear of *life* and *light* and find them attributed at creation itself to Christ. By "the Word" John is referring to God's self-expression in his Son, who expressed and carried out God's will not only as far back as creation, but through all eternity. *He* was ever light and life, and in coming to earth he sought to endow men afresh with something beyond physical living and physical seeing. Thus, just as God at creation made men live and see through Jesus Christ, so in this speaking we have once again the creative *Word of God* made manifest for the sake of his creatures. Christ, eternal Son of God and the Father's agent in creation, was coming to create anew.

Philosophers' Confusion

Learned men have pointed out that the term "word" is *logos* in the Greek; and the Greek expression may be more important than is usually the case of a foreign word for an English-speaking reader. Certain Greek thinkers had used *logos* to describe an eternal principle of reason that held the universe together. A Jewish philosopher named Philo combined this with the Hebrew idea of the wisdom of God (as wisdom is spoken of, for example, in *Prov., ch. 8*). Thus the conclusion has frequently been reached that John simply took over this notion and began his Gospel by describing Christ as the reasonable principle in the universe, known to the Jews as God's wisdom.

It may be so. However, as we have already noted, the idea of a creative, eventful word of God springs right from Scripture. Already we have found the expression or its counterpart in Genesis and in the prophets. Moreover, "word of God" is an expression often used in the other Gospels and in The Acts to refer to the gospel. To take but one example among many, we read in *Mark 2: 2* that Jesus "was preaching the word to them." In Paul's writings, "God's word" and related terms recur as a way of mentioning the gospel of Christ (for example, see *II Cor. 2: 17; Col. 4: 3*).

We do not need to look beyond the Bible itself to discover why John would choose this way of referring to Christ. There is no particular need to dip into Greek philosophy to understand the term. It may be, of course, that John was aware of the philosophical idea of the *logos*, but if so, he must have set out to turn

the notion in quite a new direction. Instead of something abstract for philosophers' minds to play with, he taught that the eternal Word of God became flesh and blood in *Jesus of Nazareth*. God spoke in Jesus Christ; and that was action indeed, for nothing was ever the same again. Instead of philosophy, John puts his pen to paper in order to proclaim the Jesus of flesh and blood.

The declaration that Jesus Christ the Son of God had come puts this Gospel into the category of a story of *action*. Because God acted in this way, Jesus was bound to be active and not merely speculative or reflective throughout his career. Because God's Word meant a new, creative act, uttered with the purpose of making all things new, the words of Jesus, connected with his deeds, are part of the essential story and not incidental features. That Jesus should be involved in crisis after crisis and become embroiled in controversy that would destroy him—this is an act of God.

The Prologue and What It Foreshadows

As we read the prologue, we find the development of the Gospel foreshadowed. There is an insistence that Jesus, who was ever with God, came into the world for the good of men. He who was eternally the life and light of men came to earth specifically to shine into the darkness and conquer it, bestowing eternal life on all believers.

We also find a reference to John the Baptist, coming earlier than we might expect (*John 1: 6-8*). This is not ready to be discussed as yet; we shall wait until we have heard more about this prophetic man.

But the picture is darkened before the prologue is over. Jesus came to his own people that they might be children of God. Yet in the same breath it is said that "the world knew him not." Even "his own people received him not." (*Vs. 10-11.*) On the other hand, those who did receive him were given power to be God's children. (*Vs. 12-13.*) This tragic note strikes simultaneously with the joyful note. This tragedy is not what befalls Jesus, but the fate of those who remain in darkness, having no knowledge of God. Christ, however, is not overcome by the rejection he encounters. Precisely in his humiliation he achieves his glory ("full of grace and truth; . . . glory as of the only Son from the Father"). Precisely in his condescension and in the things he did, said, and suffered because of it, he did what no other man could do—he revealed the invisible God. (*Vs. 14-18.*)

The Themes of Our Study

The prologue discloses basic themes of the Gospel of John. It introduces John in such a way that the reader is led to appreciate the importance of these themes. They are not separate but simply different aspects of the one story told in the Gospel.

1. We shall be observing how event is piled upon event, building inevitably to the climax. Although we can comment only on a few verses here and there, we

shall constantly have in mind the whole unfolding story. The great deeds or signs that we read of will be seen as moving both tragically and triumphantly toward their goal. The goal is—to overcome the world.

2. We shall be watchful for the references to Jesus' glory and particularly to what Jesus calls his "hour." Jesus' hour of glory ever more clearly turns out to be identical with his suffering and humiliation. This is perhaps the most characteristic theme of the Fourth Gospel. Even in the prologue we see the shadows falling. Yet these shadows, in the remarkable development of this Gospel, are blazing with divine light, for

the Fourth Gospel tells the story of the man who was born to die.

3. Belief in Jesus as over against unbelief will be seen again and again and from many angles. This, too, has been indicated in the prologue. Some will accept him as he is and enter into the eternal life that was from the beginning. Some will reject or hate him and pass into the shadows beyond our discerning.

It is a subtle Gospel. But its subtlety has not been lost on countless unsophisticated people who have read its words, and in reading, have believed in Jesus Christ.

2

JOHN THE BAPTIST—OLD PREACHER, NEW PREACHER

Read *John 1: 6-8, 19-51; 3: 25-30*.

EACH one of the four Gospels contains a large, and for that reason puzzling, amount of material concerning John the Baptist. John quickly passes from the scene and makes no permanent contribution to Jesus' ministry. He introduces Jesus, then disappears from

the picture, and, according to the Synoptic Gospels, is put to death midway in Jesus' career. Yet he does, nevertheless, receive a lot of attention.

In the Fourth Gospel John the Baptist is described in a more concentrated way, and perhaps we could say in a simpler way, than in the other Gospels. What John preached; apart from his witness to Jesus himself, is neither recorded nor discussed. There are no scenes showing him in the act of baptizing. Even the baptism of Jesus is not mentioned, though a knowledge of this event is probably taken for granted. We hear nothing of John the Baptist's doubts that led him (according to *Matt., ch. 11*) to send his disciples to question Jesus specifically about whether or not he was the Christ. The first three Gospels present John the Baptist as a very striking personality. Indeed, Jesus at one point delivers a considerable discourse about him (*vs. 7-15*). We find no such "man with personality" in the Fourth Gospel. On the contrary, John refuses, in this account, to allow himself to come into the foreground of investigation and discussion. In the Synoptic Gospels John is an ethical teacher, but in the Fourth Gospel he submits to having his teaching reduced to one essential point: proclaiming Christ. In the Synoptics, he is referred to as "Elijah" even by Jesus himself, but in the Fourth Gospel the Baptist refuses to accept this name. Whereas, according to the Synoptics, John made a great impact by baptizing repentant persons, in the Fourth Gospel his baptizing with water is called quite inadequate because One much greater than he is already present in the world (*John 1: 26-27*).

John, Old Testament Prophet

John the Baptist is introduced at an unexpectedly early point in the prologue (*vs. 6-8*). At that point John the Baptist is called a man sent from God for the purpose of bearing witness, but we are warned not to confuse him with the Light of the World. Others apparently were confused. Many scholars believe that John the Baptist had disciples who formed themselves

ST. JOHN, THE BAPTIST, by *Pietro Montana*

Church of
St. Jean Baptiste,
New York, N. Y.



into a cult that existed after his death and got in the way of Christianity. If so, this kind of negative reference to the Baptist becomes clear: the author of this Gospel wants to stress the fact that Jesus is the center of worship, and that any sect springing from John the Baptist's ministry is out of place.

Conceivably this is one reason for the kind of treatment given to John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel. If he was the forceful and compelling preacher described by the first three Gospels, making a tremendous impact upon the people, then certainly his followers might have clung to his memory and centered their faith around the work of this powerful evangelist. This, after all, occurs frequently within the church of our own day. A group of camp followers gathers itself around a particular preacher or theologian. A denomination raises its standard, and fights under that banner, more inspired by denominational pride than by zeal for Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to believe, however, that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is interested in John the Baptist only for the purpose of debunking a sect that may have formed itself in the name of the famous moral reformer. He has other reasons. He sees John the Baptist as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," which is a direct reference to the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. In all the Gospels it is apparent that this herald of Christ is the link between the Old Testament and the New. On the basis of Old Testament prophecy, he proclaims that the Kingdom of God is rushing in upon men who are unaware of what is happening. John the Baptist goes ahead of Christ to "make straight the way of the Lord."

The Baptist is well aware of his own limitations. He denies, not only being the Christ, but also being either Elijah or "the prophet" referred to in *Deut. 18: 15*. He is content just to be a mouthpiece—a voice. This voice, however, is inspired by the whole tradition of prophecy, and the man himself is, in a sense, the last of the prophets.

When John the Baptist finally sees Jesus (*John 1: 29-34*), he immediately calls him "the Lamb of God." The figure of speech doubtless is prompted both by the daily sacrificial practices of the Temple and by *Isa., ch. 53*. Thus John the Baptist draws upon the richest of Old Testament prophecy in order to hail Christ as the one who, precisely by virtue of suffering for the sins of many, is the Messiah.

As has been pointed out in the preceding article, John finds the glory and triumph of Christ in his self-sacrifice. This is the direction in which the Old Testament points, although only the Baptist and perhaps a few other contemporaries of Jesus understood the role of the Messiah in this way. They understood "glory" in the literal sense that we ourselves are inclined to ascribe to it. They were a literal people. That all the sound and fury of John the Baptist's preaching should be for the sake of witnessing to a Messiah who was bound to die like one of the sacrificial lambs of the

Temple seemed inconceivable. The people, quite naturally, preferred to cling to a notion of a "glorious" Messiah who would properly usher in a day of prosperity, freedom, and military might. They were unprepared for the paradox of a Christ whose greatness was to be displayed in his dying.

John the Baptist, the link between the Old Testament and the New, grasped as no one else did the inner meaning of Old Testament prophecy. He revealed the meaning of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, a chapter that apparently had made little impact on Israel. But this is not strange. Who among *us* does not shrink from the implications of what is taught there about the Suffering Servant? In the words "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John, as it were, brought to completion the Old Testament witness and, at the same moment, introduced the New Testament witness.

John the Baptist, New Testament Witness

If, in the foregoing words, John the Baptist spoke the last word of prophecy, he also showed what Christian witness is when he concluded his testimony by saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John 3: 30*). The work of Christian witness, whether in a pulpit or in everyday life, is to stand aside and let Christ supersede oneself. To be nothing, that Christ may be all, is the role of the Christian believer.

Let us not confuse this with mere modesty or humility. We are not told about John's inner feelings, except that like the friend of the bridegroom he rejoiced greatly "at the bridegroom's voice" (*v. 29*). John the Baptist was a man, however, with human feelings, and, considering his reputation as teacher and reformer, his rejoicing may well have been mixed with regret at the humility that was *forced* upon him. He was, after all, bowing to the inevitable. Jesus was here, and there was no further place for John once he had heralded Christ's coming. John the Baptist was not going to save the world by his personality, his eloquence, or even his perception. Faced by Jesus Christ, he had no choice but to retire from the scene. As was said so early in the Fourth Gospel, "he was *not* the light . . ."

That John bowed to the inevitable is shown by *ch. 1: 35-51*. There is no space here to discuss the actions and reactions of the first disciples of Jesus, except to note that they followed Jesus because they had heard John indicate who he was. By pointing toward Christ, John abdicated his place as the teacher of these men who formerly had been attracted to himself. The two disciples of John the Baptist referred to in *v. 37* "followed Jesus" in more senses than one. Literally, they walked after him. However, a double meaning is here concealed, for the term "follow" in the New Testament is frequently used to describe the process of becoming a disciple. Even this, however, does not exhaust the sense of the word, for it is obvious that in following Jesus these men did not realize what they were doing. All they were conscious of was that John had prompted

them to find out more about Jesus. Here again, we see John the Baptist turning men away from his own personality and his own preaching, to pursue something they have not yet understood.

In *ch. 3: 28* we find that the Baptist once again has to remind men that he has already disclaimed being the Christ. If we think in terms of the relative greatness of John the Baptist and Jesus twenty centuries ago, this may not seem a difficult disclaimer to make. Let any leader of men, in any age, wants at heart to be a messiah. He wants to be the great reformer, the great discoverer of moral truths, the great thinker who leads others to think as he does, or at least the man who helps other persons to find themselves. It is not easy for any person at any time to recognize that the best he can do is point *away* from himself toward Jesus Christ.

It is not easy to accept this witnessing function, but Jesus himself makes it possible by the sheer fact of overruling our own ambitions. Christ overshadows all those who, in their very activity on his behalf, might threaten to overshadow him. He established the fact of this power the hard way—that is, by being lifted up upon the throne of the cross, there to reign over men. But having done so, he makes foolish our presumptuousness and our all too human aspirations.

The Christian witness is the one who bows to this fact and sees to it that he in no way attempts to get in the way of Jesus Christ the Lord.

As the last of the prophets, John the Baptist saw that he must decrease. As the first of Christian preachers and teachers, he recognized the same obligation. It was enough for him that he should be a voice subsiding into silence while the voice of Christ took over.

3

A SECRET SIGN AND A PUBLIC SIGN

Read *John, ch. 2.*

Jesus springs into *action*, thus commencing that series of deeds and words that will bring him eventually but inevitably to his death. *Chapter 2* begins quietly enough, with the very pleasant story of Jesus' performing a miracle at a marriage feast. But before the chapter is over, Jesus has committed an act of violence in the Temple itself—leading naturally enough to suspicion, opposition, and hostility.

Anyone familiar with the first three Gospels will recognize at once that whereas the writers of the Synoptic Gospels placed the cleansing of the Temple toward the end of Jesus' ministry, John chooses to describe it at the beginning. Possibly there were two such incidents, but that does not seem likely. At any rate, *when* events occurred was no great problem to the Gospel writers. No one was keeping notes on the things that Jesus did and said, and no one would be prepared to document the facts of Jesus' career in the exact order of occurrence. Every one of the Gospel writers had his own special kind of emphasis, and every one arranged the material in such a way as to make the gospel message clear. What needs to concern us is not *when* Jesus cleansed the Temple, but *why* the author of the Fourth Gospel thought it so

appropriate to follow up the story of the marriage feast with the grim account of Jesus' encounter with the authorities.

John refers to the miracle at the marriage feast as "the first of his signs" (*v. 11*). The word "signs" is the typical term used by John to describe Christ's miracles. A sign is something that points beyond itself, and thus we must look for clues about what this peculiar deed means. The cleansing of the Temple was not miraculous, but neither was it just a spontaneous outburst of anger. Both acts, in their own way, symbolize the meaning of the ministry of Jesus.

Old Things Made New

The first of Jesus' deeds, the conversion of water into wine, is unique among the miracles recorded by John. Alone among his "signs," this one accomplished nothing important in itself. To save a host from embarrassment at a wedding is surely in a completely different category from healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead. This was a kind of parable—acted out.

The miracle at Cana can be thought of as a definite



proof that Jesus approved of marriage and was happy in quiet domestic situations. The "human interest" aspect of the story, however, which has been widely played up by persons anxious to stress Jesus' interest in marriage and the home, is quite out of place in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. We simply do not stumble upon homely glimpses into the personal life of Jesus. The writer of the Fourth Gospel emphasizes this event as *the first of his signs*.

The miracle at Cana, an apparently simple story, actually interweaves several themes. Possibly the mother of Jesus represents Judaism, which is to be replaced or fulfilled by Christ. Mary, whether a representative of Judaism or not, tries to influence her son. He brushes her aside and says, in effect, that he has his own destiny to fulfill, a destiny prepared for him by the Father. (Vs. 3-4.)

Here, in his brusque reproof, he uses the expression that in one form or another is to recur so often until it is finally explained: "My hour has not yet come." Does this mean that the time had not yet come for Christ to manifest his glory by the working of miracles? Or does it look forward to the hour of his death and glorification? Since John is so full of double meanings, we shall probably not be far astray in seeing both elements present in Jesus' answer. The time for *any* act of Christ is divinely determined, and no human will can hasten it or call it forth. No one, not even his mother, has the right to put pressure upon Jesus Christ. *He* will decide what needs to be done and when. Yet, beyond all the signs of his public ministry, there is *the hour*—the hour of his death and glorification—without which his redemptive work would have no effect. His great hour will turn out to be that of his crucifixion, and only then will he fully carry out the destiny set for him.

The waterpots used in the purification ceremonial of the Jews introduce another theme in this story. That Jesus should transform the water into wine witnesses to the fact that he at one and the same time fulfills and goes beyond Judaism. By his order the jars are filled, showing that he does not despise Judaism. At the same time he introduces something new into the jars, showing that Judaism is not enough now that he is present. Moreover, it is likely that the outward cleansing brought about by water is contrasted with the inward reviving of the spirit symbolized by wine. This is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, contrasted with the essentially Judaistic baptism of John the Baptist.

What has happened in this transformation is not generally made known at the feast. So secret is the act that the steward of the feast praises the bridegroom for saving the best wine until the end. The servants, who are representative of the humble faith and obedience of the disciples, know what has happened. The chief men of the feast are ignorant of Jesus' actions as were the rulers of the Jews. This *hiddenness* of Jesus' work is very characteristic not

only of the Fourth Gospel but of all the Gospels. Jesus accomplishes his mission precisely by remaining unrecognized. He is the seed that falls into the ground, and only thus is he the Redeemer of Israel.

The relationship between Christ and Judaism is not specifically mentioned. But it is there. Readers of the Fourth Gospel, at the time it was written, would certainly have grasped this meaning. Yet the significance of this miracle is not limited to the issue between the Christian church and the Jews. Above and beyond all else, this is a creative act—an act of him by whom all things were made and who has come into the world to renew creation. This sign represents the reversal of the death-bound course of human life, as do all the miracles. It anticipates the new creation by the Spirit and points to resurrection.



Despite the hiddenness of what Jesus has done, his action is not without fruit at the time. No one sees the significance of this sign—*no one but the disciples*. To the disciples, however, the secret is communicated. Faith is created in them, *and that is the true purpose of the miracle*. (V. 11.) This peculiar sign, standing at the beginning of all Christ's miracles, shows the true and inward meaning of the others. Whatever Jesus did, whether to give sight or to give life, was done to point to himself as the Redeemer of men. Perhaps a miracle like the transformation of water into wine, having no great value in itself, marks the beginning of Jesus' signs in order that we may be alert to the true and inward meaning of everything that is to follow. We are hereby warned always to look below the surface, to discover in everything that Jesus did something more than mere compassion and good will—something that testifies to the person of Jesus Christ himself.

The Public Sign

If the miracle at Cana was deliberately secret, the next act of Jesus is deliberately public. He proclaims his lordship over the Temple in a most forcible way. Although the cleansing of the Temple was not a miracle, it was a sign in the prophetic sense. It was a symbolic act accompanying words that were spoken. Or, perhaps we can say that the words spoken explain this violent sign, just as the elaborate controversies later on in the Gospel explain the meaning of the miracles.

The sign at Cana interprets the Temple incident. The affair at the Temple does not really have to do



MARRIAGE AT CANA, by Joseph A. Coletti

with the Temple itself and the practices carried on there. It has to do with Jesus' authority: who he claims to be and what he proposes to do. Where Jesus' course of action is going to lead him is foreshadowed in the words the disciples remembered had been written but did not then understand: "Zeal for thy house will consume me." The word translated "consume" carries the idea of destruction. By the destruction of Jesus at the hands of his enemies, in revenge for his assertion of God's own authority, the house of God will be purified.

This theme of destruction appears plainly in *vs. 18-22*. Jesus tells the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They don't know what he means. They have trouble enough understanding that the Temple will actually be destroyed. But Jesus refers to "the temple of his body." He, too, will be put to death. In the resurrection of *that* temple lies the hope of the future.

Something much more drastic than anything relating to the practices of Jewish worship must take place—namely, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is to be the turning point for human life. Thus, although the worship practices of the Jews are made the object of his attack in the Temple scene, what Christ does cannot be really fruitful until he has suffered. Then the outcome will be not merely a reform but the new creature—the death of the old man, the burial of the old man with Christ, and the beginning of resurrected life. But all this naturally remained obscure even to the disciples until Jesus carried through with those things which he prophesied (*v. 22*).

Transformation—Resurrection

What has happened here? Jesus has secretly performed an act of transformation that indicates what his whole career on earth is concerned with. Also, he has gone out of his way to give public offense to the Jewish authorities, indicating that just as he transformed water into wine secretly, so he will make manifest the transformation of old life into new life. What he did privately at Cana would not lead to consequences: but the consequences symbolized at the marriage feast would follow when men took him seriously enough to try to destroy him.

Thus the three themes pointed out in our first article, and it does not particularly matter in what order we take them, come to life in this second chapter. Events begin to crackle around us like lightning; and the secret sign is recorded in order to indicate the meaning and intended outcome of the public sign of authority in the Temple. The altogether necessary suffering of Christ (hinted at in the expression, "My hour has not yet come") is prepared for and interpreted by the Temple incident.

Finally, faith versus unbelief in regard to the person of Christ is strongly asserted as the basic issue. At Cana, we are told, "his disciples believed in him." At the very end of the chapter, while Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, it is said that "many believed in his name" (*v. 23*). But the belief brought forth by the strong impression made in Jerusalem was not enough. "Jesus," we are told, "did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what

was in man." (Vs. 24-25.) Faith that could be relied upon would come only when he had made all

things new—and that could happen only when he had died and had risen from the dead.

4

WHAT EVERY TEACHER OUGHT TO KNOW

Read *John 3: 1-21*.

IN THE mind of one man, at least, the things that Jesus had done at the very beginning of his career raised disturbing questions. This one man was the Rabbi Nicodemus who mysteriously came to Jesus "by night" and engaged in one of the most celebrated conversations of all time. Elsewhere in John he is referred to only in passing. A Pharisee, he later defended Jesus briefly before other Pharisees. (*John 7: 50-51*.) After the death of Jesus we encounter him again as one of the two men who took care of Jesus' burial. In this last reference he is once more described as the man "who had at first come to him by night" (*ch. 19: 39*).

The fact that he came by night is probably another case of a double meaning in John. To be sure, he may have come by night simply because it was inconvenient to come at any other time, as some persons have amiably suggested. Probably, however, he came by night because he was fearful of associating with Jesus in the daytime, when he might be seen. Jesus was already too controversial a figure. However, this does not exhaust the sense of the phrase "by night," for the nature of his conversation with Christ and the fact that he never was openly a disciple, make the idea of his coming by night very suggestive indeed. Could we not say that he lived in a mental condition of half-light—combining open-mindedness with indecision? He wants to engage in no public discussion with Jesus; nor does he want to confess Jesus as Lord or to repudiate him. The word "night," as we shall see in other connections, is quite symbolical in John, and Nicodemus' furtive visit under the cover of night despite his eagerness to inquire into Jesus' doctrine suggests a state of mind halfway between belief and unbelief. Within the covers of the Fourth Gospel the question of whether Nicodemus ever achieved a confessing belief in Christ is left unsolved.

The New Birth

Nicodemus opens the conversation by stating that Jesus is evidently a teacher sent by God. (*V. 2*.) Apparently Jesus accepts this as a challenge to declare his message and his mission, which he abruptly does: "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*v. 3*). (In the version traditionally familiar to us, Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.")

Perhaps Nicodemus is being deliberately perverse in asking how a man, once he is old, can be born again,

as though he were thinking about a literal second birth, as one event follows another. Jesus ignores this frivolity and explains that he is referring to being "born of water and the Spirit." What Jesus is talking about is the true purpose and destiny of being born at all.

What does the connection of water with the Spirit signify? On the one hand, a man is to seek his true, intended life in the church of Christ. Entrance into that church is associated with the visible practice of Baptism, and so the "water" cannot be overlooked. One cannot live without water, without any roots in a community of believers. Yet to enter the church, even through Baptism, is nothing unless it is at the same time Baptism *by the Holy Spirit*. Religious ceremonies and practices avail nothing in themselves. They belong to the "flesh," to the series of age-old religious ceremonials in which men have always engaged. What makes entrance into the church, even by Baptism, meaningful is the activity of the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (*V. 6*.)

Even religion cannot transform human nature. A man may be ever so religious, ever so zealous about the church (as Nicodemus presumably was about the synagogue), and nevertheless remain a sinful, fallen man. Yet there is another possibility held out to man: to be ushered by the Spirit into dimensions of life that he could not have conceived for himself. Family love, art, intellect, and all the rest will not do. The Kingdom of God—or, as it is habitually referred to in John, *eternal life*—lies beyond all these. For a man to enter into that kind of inheritance means that he must be carried along by the Spirit of God, which is as free, invisible, unpredictable, and yet as undoubtedly real and effective, as the wind. A new creation, which makes something out of human life, comes from God's side. Man has no way of cultivating it on his own. On the contrary, it is something brought about by God *in his own way*.

How to Misunderstand the New Birth

In this conversation Jesus has been speaking to a Pharisee. He has been speaking to a man who was accustomed to formalism and legalism and tradition. When, however, we take Jesus' saying about being born "anew," or "again," out of this setting, it is easy to misinterpret it. The idea of "twice-born Christians" has all too frequently been used as a club with which to beat the heads of those who are not pious enough

for other people's taste! The idea of a new birth has been understood as pointing to a second event that can be fixed in time. It has been understood as a conversion event, easy to describe and to some extent even easy to predict. It has, in short, been taken to mean that moment of emotional upheaval that sometimes marks the turning point in a man's life.

One must certainly not speak lightly of such experiences, for they may be tokens of God's saving work. Error creeps in when we identify the sign with the reality. Presumptuousness arises when we become satisfied that a particular kind of human experience has occurred. Many people continually hark back to a certain past moment in their lives; they take the second birth to have been achieved in a particular chapter of their autobiography, and they never tire of referring to it. Jesus, on the other hand, calls into question all man's religiousness, whether it be the religiousness of a Pharisee or a Pentecostalist. The new birth does not refer to something already satisfactorily accomplished in some individual's personal development. Rather, it refers to the end and goal of all existence; it refers to what lies ahead and beyond, to the new creation we have not yet entered into but to which we are continually urged to conform ourselves. To look *behind* and not *ahead* means to evade what Jesus is speaking of in this passage and may lead even with the best intentions in the world into spiritual pride.

Jesus does not claim *at this point* to be saying anything very new, radical, or original. When Nicodemus inquires how all this can be, Jesus expresses astonishment that a rabbi should not know these things. (See *vs. 9-11.*) Nicodemus has failed to comprehend his whole religion. Judaism already knew that only God himself can make life meaningful and that there is no substitute for God's secret, hidden work—as invisible as the wind itself. To look upward and ahead toward God, and not at external things or at inward piety, is the very essence of the Jewish faith that Nicodemus professes to believe and to teach.

The New Birth in Christ

Jesus says to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (*V. 12.*) Nicodemus would no doubt think that "heavenly things" had to do with great and mysterious and divine events concerning Israel's future greatness, such as were predicted by those who wrote in the time between the Old and New Testaments. But Jesus has a much greater mystery in store for him, for which he is quite unprepared. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." (*Vs. 14-15.*) The death and resurrection of the man Jesus, his being lifted up upon the cross, is the crux of everything for human life. This is the only road of access to what is greater than our earth-bound existence. The

person who seeks the meaning of life is directed to the Father's giving of his only-begotten Son. Therefore, the ultimate decision for every man is to believe or not to believe in Jesus Christ.

In the Revised Standard Version, *vs. 16-21* are not set in quotation marks, indicating that the translators do not believe these are words from Jesus' own lips but are the comment of the Gospel writer. This does not change their significance. The most famous of all verses in John—*John 3:16*—emphasizes the gift of God's own Son, whose sacrifice, as it turns out, is the



way to life eternal. This passage, beginning with *v. 16*, stresses the crucial nature of the decision that every man must make. Nicodemus had come to Jesus to inquire about his teaching, as though it were something that he could take home with him, consider, and appraise. Jesus, however, confronts him with choosing where he stands in relationship to the person he came to question. The questioner is put upon the witness stand, so to speak, by the impending event of the crucifixion: for someday he will have to confess or deny the dying and risen Lord. Nicodemus came as a disquieted intellectual; he went away confronted by a decision of faith.

And that is our decision of faith also. The mission of Christ is not to judge the world but to save the world. (*Vs. 17-18.*) He comes with the single-minded purpose of bringing salvation. In him the gospel is incarnate. Precisely because this is so, those who reject this gospel stand judged and condemned. Christ does not sit in judgment upon men's works, to decide whether they are worthy of punishment or of reward. He has nothing to offer but grace. Nothing can now ruin man, but to reject that grace. Nothing lies beyond forgiveness, except to repudiate forgiveness.

Yet men seek to hide and cover up their evil deeds—loving the darkness and hating the light—because they cannot bear to be confronted by the sheer grace of Jesus Christ. (*Vs. 19-21.*) It would be easier for them to keep on trying to defend and justify themselves, thus avoiding him who alone can bring men to God. But as to those who do not shun the light, but gladly come to it, their deeds are "wrought in

God" (v. 21). In other words, they do not take their stand on their own self-righteousness, but on the fact that God works in them to do what is right and true. Knowing that all goodness is of him, they do not fly from the author of all the good they know, but rather come to him in order that he may complete what he has begun.

Here again, Nicodemus, as a Pharisee, would perhaps have been happy to be judged by his own good and pious deeds and reverent thoughts. To this way of thinking he was accustomed. But the man who came

by night presumably went away by night, not knowing what to make of the strange doctrine of grace, grace made available by the forthcoming death of the "teacher come from God." He came to learn wisdom, and stumbled over elementary truth, and finally went away confronted by the prospect of the cross of Christ. He asked for information, but what was asked of him was faith. In the end he helped to bury Jesus, but whether with faith we are never told. We are reminded only that he had come by night and that he did not come as one convinced he was coming to the Light.

5

THE RESISTANCE OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Read *John 4: 1-30*.

IN THE words of the King James Version, it is written that "the common people heard [Jesus] gladly" (*Mark 12: 37*). This, taken with such a saying as "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (*Matt. 5: 3*), has led to a good deal of sentimentality.

We have formed a mental picture of Jesus' opponents as consisting of scribes, Pharisees, and the rulers of the people who had so much to lose. These are, indeed, the source of the opposition that in the end brought Jesus to the cross. We should not, however, conclude that in contrast to these the man in the street always welcomed Jesus with open arms. Where, we may ask, were "the common people" when the crowd turned against Christ and cried out for his crucifixion?

HEAD OF CHRIST, by *Malvina Hoffman*



It is quite evident, as we shall see later, that the crowd was not disposed to follow Jesus very far. The story of the Samaritan woman suggests just how strenuously Jesus had to exert himself in bearing in upon those "poor in spirit" who did at length yield to faith in him. For here is the account of a woman with everything to gain and nothing to lose, a woman of broken and barren life. When confronted by Jesus, she did not quickly put herself in his hands, but, on the contrary, resorted to every stratagem of resistance and evasion before she was virtually compelled to confess that this was indeed the Christ. Here is an account of the resistance, not of the lofty but of the lowly. The victory that Jesus won over this woman was gained only with the greatest effort and difficulty on Jesus' part.

There are other materials in the fourth chapter of John. Like all the rest of the Gospel, this chapter is very thoughtfully constructed, and the end of it, apparently so remote from the beginning, can be rightly understood only when we have surveyed the chapter in its entirety. In the account of the encounter with the Samaritan woman, the predominant theme is that of *faith against unbelief*, and the other themes we have been pursuing do not come into view except by implication until we have seen the whole chapter.

Difficult Dialogue

The conversation with the woman of Samaria occurred when Jesus, on his way from Jerusalem to Galilee, took occasion to pass through Samaria. On this trip Jesus, who had already been challenged by the Temple authorities and who had apparently failed to bring an inquiring Pharisee named Nicodemus to faith, became involved in what was up to this time his most intricate recorded conversation with anybody. The major point of the story is that, whereas Jesus had failed to produce much faith in Jerusalem, he succeeded in Samaria, a hostile territory populated by people who were antagonistic to the Jews. But if this was a victory, it was not easily won. For the other

person in this extraordinary dialogue was both cautious and quick-witted and disposed to hold Jesus at arm's length by her brilliant repartee. Let us look with some care at how the conversation developed.

Jesus begins by simply asking for a drink of water. As first glance this seems straightforward enough, but the woman's reply reflects an awakened suspicion. She wonders why a Jew would ask her for a drink, and she wonders why Jesus would speak to a woman at all, inasmuch as it was not customary for men to converse with women they did not know. The main stress, however, falls on the point that Jews "have no dealings with Samaritans." (*Vs. 7-9.*)

Jesus, certainly no less quick-witted than the woman, at once seizes the advantage he has gained by surprising her. Instead of pursuing his request for a drink, he tells her that if she only knew who was talking to her, she would ask a drink of him. Had she done so, she would have received "living water." (*V. 10.*) This startles her afresh, as we immediately find in the following verses, for she notices that Jesus doesn't have anything to draw water with, and, in any case, "living water" would seem to mean spring water as distinguished from water lying in a cistern. As to exactly what Jesus meant by "living water," we are almost as much in the dark as the woman of Samaria. There may be an allusion to baptism, but Christ's various references to himself as "water" seem to pick up the idea of water as a necessity of life. (Elsewhere he speaks of himself as bread and light, other things necessary for life itself to be sustained.) But although the woman can't understand what Jesus is talking about, she parries his offer by pointing out that according to a Samaritan tradition the well was given by Jacob; what was good enough for Jacob was good enough for her. (*V. 12.*) She is feeling him out, to see precisely what kind of offer he is making or, in fact, what the conversation is all about.

Jesus now takes advantage of her mystification to develop his figure of speech, speaking of the water that produces eternal life. How much of this the woman understands is not apparent. Presumably she senses that in some appealing religious way an offer of new life is being held forth to her. Here she momentarily abandons her caution and, either sincerely or for the purpose of seeing what Jesus will say next, eagerly asks for this wondrous water that he has to give. She has already perceived that no ordinary person is talking to her, and feels, therefore, that it is a suitable moment at which to be pious.

And now Jesus thoroughly startles her: "Go, call your husband, and come here" (*v. 16*). At such a moment, a moment apparently of high spirituality, this would be the last demand she would want to hear. Instantly she evades him: "I have no husband." But Jesus presses his advantage: "You have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly" (*vs. 17-18*). There is probably a double reference here. The Jews believe

Did the Miracles Occur?

Neither the story of Jesus' life and teachings nor the accounts of his miracles are treated by the writers of the Gospels as proofs of his divinity or as unquestionable demonstrations of his Messiahship. The writers of the Gospels—especially the writer of the Gospel of John (*ch. 20: 31*)—want their readers to be convinced "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," but they report faithfully that many of the original observers of Jesus' mighty works denounced him as controlled by the devil, as a blasphemer, as a subverter of Judaism. But for the man who takes his stand within the community of faith, the meaning of the miracles and of God's message through them becomes as apparent now as it was to Jesus' original circle of followers. Because the lives of men were transformed by the power that they saw at work in Jesus' mighty acts, they were convinced that he was the Christ, the Anointed One of God.

—Howard Clark Kee.

From *Jesus and God's New People: The Four Gospels*. Westminster Guides to the Bible series, The Westminster Press. Copyright, 1959, by W. L. Jenkins.

that the Samaritans had become corrupted by intermarriage with five nations, thus thoroughly diluting any resemblance they ever had to the Jews and the Jewish faith. However, the primary reference is undoubtedly to the literal fact that the woman is an adulteress. Just when she has become so receptive to religiousness, Jesus starkly reminds her of the facts of her life, which do not bear inspection.

Presumably the woman was disconcerted, but this did not prevent her from introducing instantly another line of defense. She begins to converse about which practices constitute true worship—Jewish or Samaritan (*vs. 19-24*). Avoiding altogether the matter of her five husbands, she presses Jesus on the question of the right religious tradition. What, after all, is a person to believe, when the Samaritans declare that a certain mountain is the center of worship and the Jews claim that Jerusalem is the center of worship?

But Jesus is prepared for her. He permits her no such evasion. Although emphasizing that "salvation is from the Jews," he asserts that *where* men worship is not really the point. There *are* many different views about religion, but the hour is rushing in upon mankind when the *localized* nature of worship will be outmoded. Indeed, that hour has already come and what counts is to worship the Father "in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him." These words strike a negative note. It will not do, therefore, for anyone to attach himself to a place or mode of worship that is going to pass away. (Not many years later both places of worship were literally ruined.)

Worship must go beyond locality or tradition. To worship God "in spirit" means to rise above what is limited by physical surroundings or historical tradition or anything else that actually keeps worship earth-bound. This beautiful cathedral, this lovely place in the woods, this tradition in which we happen to glory while others are equally proud of their own tradition—all these will go the way of everything material. As for the expression "worship the Father in . . . truth," this at the very least refers to worship that penetrates to the object of all worship and is not diverted by the externals that draw attention away from God himself.

We could well pause over these thoughts which, among other things, point to the universal sweep of Christ's ministry, a ministry not to be confined to Jews or to Samaritans but destined to reach over the world. Yet we are not permitted to pause at this point, for the dialogue rapidly moves on. The woman now falls behind her last line of defense, saying, "I know that Messiah is coming . . . ; when he comes, he will show us all things" (v. 25). But this is no line of defense at all. Jesus immediately answers, "I who speak to you am he." (V. 26.) The Messiah who is to interpret the matters that have been under discussion is already present and, in fact, he is at that very moment talking to the woman herself. This should be seen in relationship to Jesus' remarks about true worship. He has not been speaking of a kind of generalized worship, with the emphasis on sincerity; he has been speaking of worship that comes to rest only in himself. To worship the Father in spirit and in truth means to worship him through and in Jesus Christ.



Resistance Overcome

We discover that the woman, after a long, hard fight, knows that she has been overwhelmed by the stranger who so unexpectedly came upon her. (Vs. 28-30.) There is no further line of defense possible, no further dialogue open to her. All she can do is go back to her own people and bid them come and see this man, raising the question, "Can this be the Christ?" If we glance farther down in the chapter (vs. 39-42), we learn that many Samaritans believed in Christ because of the woman's testimony, and some believed because of his own word. Here is confession of faith in a strange country, brought about through conversation with an adulterous woman. It occurs just after hostility has been aroused in Jerusalem and even a sympathetic Pharisee like Nicodemus has evidently been stupefied or unconvinced.

Unlike the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers, this adulterous woman of Samaria has been impressed enough by Jesus to make a tentative statement of faith. At least she has been the instrument for bringing faith to others. Nevertheless, Jesus had to struggle with her through this difficult conversation, and she resisted him as long as she possibly could.

There are different kinds of resistance to Jesus Christ. A Pharisee would resist because he was offended by Christ's claims and by Christ's disregard of what seemed to be the sacred law through which the Kingdom would come. The vulgar person in the street would resist because Jesus' teachings would appear to be nonsense and because he would be impressed only by spectacular actions. This woman was cautious, afraid to let Jesus befriend her, basically because she could not bear to have the secrets of her life opened up to anyone's inspection. Perhaps this more subtle kind of resistance comes closest to our own guarded faith, our own failure to open ourselves to the Christ in whom we profess to believe. It is safer to go our own way, to be ourselves, to preserve our favorable self-image. We talk much of grace, but we are reluctant really to acknowledge that we stand in need of grace. This is not because we are unconscious of our need, but because, even where Jesus Christ is concerned, we prefer to live to ourselves.

In the case of the woman of Samaria, Jesus had to batter his way in. The faith she came to was *his* victory, vigorously fought for and achieved despite every evasion and line of defense employed by this clever woman.

Perhaps *we* shall never really believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world until we have been forced to our knees, unable any longer to contend with the One who is holy where we are sinful, clear-thinking where we are evasive, decisive and penetrating where we would rather avoid looking squarely at the root of our trouble. Perhaps, therefore, it will be only in death that we will know how to recognize the One who has been bearing in upon us all our lives.

BELIEF—WITH OR WITHOUT MIRACLES

Read *John 4: 41-54*.

THE Fourth Gospel now begins to record, with mounting intensity, the series of mighty acts of healing that Jesus did as "signs" of who he was.

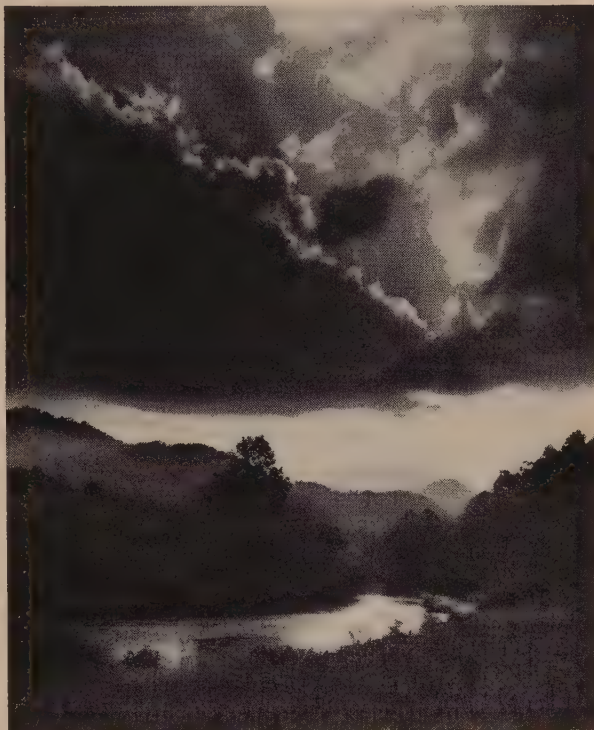
At the end of the fourth chapter we read the account of the first of these. This episode is important of all proportion to its length. John makes it abundantly clear that this account, though briefly told, is not to be taken lightly, for he begins, "So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine," and he ends the narrative by saying that this is the second sign that Jesus did (*vs. 46, 54*).

We should attempt to understand this in connection with the story of the Samaritan woman. She had come to a tentative belief in Jesus because of his probing, authoritative speech, and many of the Samaritans came to a very definite faith in him "because of his word" (*v. 41*). No miracle was done in Samaria, and yet many Samaritans, who were not of Jesus' own people, recognized who he was. When he came once more to Galilee, Jesus felt the atmosphere of unbelief. When the official whose son was sick came to beg Christ to heal the boy, Jesus responded, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" (*v. 48*). As we know, Jesus did indeed heal the man's son, but not before he had uttered this indictment of those who must see tangible signs before faith can be born in them. The Samaritans had made a better showing. From Jesus' words they knew that "this is indeed the Savior of the world" (*v. 42*). Put together with *v. 44*, where reference is made to a prophet having no honor in his own country, Jesus' words to the official say that he saw little likelihood that his own people would believe in him as the expected Christ.

Harshness and Compassion

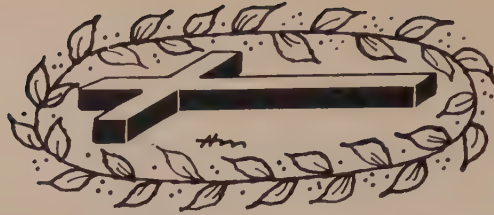
Apparently Jesus is unnecessarily harsh. Here is a man whose son is dying and who turns to Jesus for help. Surely this is no occasion for a rebuke. But faith is more than securing benefits gained from appealing to Christ in an hour of extremity. Faith is believing in Jesus—for Jesus' sake. Faith is believing in Christ for what he is in himself. The Samaritans had given evidence of that kind of faith. The official appeals to Jesus as a last resort; this was his kind of faith. He is more concerned with the immediate results than with the knowledge of God in Christ.

This desperate cry for help is obviously not a sign of unbelief: the man would not have appealed to Jesus if he had not believed that Jesus could restore his son to health. Yet in the setting of this chapter of John,



it is manifestly an inferior kind of faith that seeks Jesus out because of desperate trouble, not because of the presence and person of Jesus Christ. There is, therefore, no sentimentality in Jesus' approach to the situation. He quickly consents to exert his power; but he rebukes the faith that demands signs and wonders. He actually sends the man on his way and never goes near his house. This realistic recognition of a weak faith, or perhaps we should say an inferior faith, in contrast with a strong faith is characteristic of Christ as he is portrayed in the Fourth Gospel.

We dare not overlook the fact that Jesus did *help* the man. His harshness did not, after all, prevent him from doing that act of compassion which was within his power. One recalls the rebuke that Jesus gave to his own mother (*ch. 2: 4*) at the marriage feast at Cana. He reproves but does not refuse. He knows what is in man, but he does not fail to come to man's assistance. The love of Christ is so all-embracing that it extends even to the weaker brethren and does not fail to provide the necessities of life. If Jesus' first word to the official is, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe"—a remark undoubtedly intended for others who stood around as well as for the official himself—his next saying is, "Go; your son will live." The man who is not quite strong enough in faith never-



theless gains his point. Jesus, on his way to yielding up his own life, in the meantime grants physical life to others. Anyone who encounters Jesus Christ must take the bitter with the sweet—but the sweetness is nonetheless there.

The Patience of Faith

Jesus even makes considerable demands upon the man in his adversity. He does not offer to accompany the man home; that long and anxious journey was made without the reassuring presence of Christ. All the man has to comfort him on the long road home is the word of Jesus promising that his son will live.

This was no small demand. Jesus' word might well have leaped over the miles to restore the son to health, but so far as the father was concerned there was no proof of it as yet. He must simply go home and see. Faith would consist of believing the word of Christ before that was any demonstration that the promise was really going to be fulfilled. Anyone who has waited anxiously for a surgeon's verdict while a loved one was on the operating table can appreciate the trial to which this man's faith was put. It helps so little to be told, "All will probably be well," or "The surgeon is the best available," or even, "Such an operation has been successfully performed hundreds of times before." We wait, after all, to see the proof that *this* time nothing will go wrong. Anyone who has been summoned home because of an unexpected illness or accident in the family knows what it is to wait for the journey to end, to *find out* if things are as good as they have been pictured over the telephone. No advance assurances are quite sufficient. This official in the story was called upon to believe, to trust, before he could see what the situation really was.

Undoubtedly the suspense, the *having* to trust, is a deliberate element in the story. This time of trusting faces us all. A simple faith in Jesus Christ is required long before we can see any concrete results of his love for us. It is a parable of the patience that the man of faith must evince. It is a parable of believing what we have not yet seen or experienced—believing God's promises to us before they have been obviously fulfilled. The present time is always filled with anxiety and uncertainty. Problems with which we cannot cope, sins that are too strong for us to overcome, and illnesses that threaten to be fatal form the experience of everyday life. Faith believes, however, that such things will not always prevail. Faith believes that all this does not represent our real life—our real life that lies ahead and toward which we march. Faith believes that health

and wholeness, the putting away of sins forever, the permanent solution of problems, will be the happy outcome of what God intends. In his time, and only in his time, he will make clear and real and manifest what is hidden now. Meanwhile we can only *trust*.

Yet trust is not enough. Trust is not exactly equivalent to faith. The people of Samaria encountered Jesus, believed in him, and rejoiced in him. The hazards and horrors of life in this world had already begun to dissolve for them. We are thus called upon not only to be patient in trusting God, but to be patient with the evil facts of life that assail us, enduring them because already we have been caught up into the stream of the new life that Christ came to make available to us. Rather than walking a long, anxious journey, like the official in this story, we are invited to walk joyously and victoriously through this world, knowing that Jesus Christ has overcome the world. Pain will be no less painful, death will be no less fatal, sorrow will be no less grievous: but we shall not be waiting to see the outcome of this tragic life we live but shall be entering into the secret place of the Most High. We can afford to be patient with the troubles that assault us, for our happiness will not depend upon the chances and changes of life but upon what Jesus is. The chief end of man, the Catechism teaches us, is "to glorify God" and "enjoy him forever." If we achieve that end, how things turn out for us in this or that desperate situation will not determine whether or not we can rejoice and live. Merely to trust that all will somehow be well commits us to long and anxious journeys. To *believe*—that is, believe in Jesus Christ, believe that in him God is present bodily—makes all roads, all journeys, safe and joyous.

Alas, who among *us* has attained to these things? Yet that is the challenge of faith, that is the challenge of the *belief* of which Jesus so continually speaks in the Fourth Gospel.

Messengers of Good Cheer

The hard journey came to an end. The official's servants met him on the road and told him that his son was reviving. He immediately questions them: "When did the cure begin?" He learns that it was precisely the time when Jesus spoke. On discovering this, the official "himself believed, and all his household." Apparently true faith, and not mere hopefulness, was achieved at last.

What is the meaning of these features of the story? Remembering that John never wasted a word and that every peculiarity is full of meaning, we must look more

ously. The man, not yet knowing the facts, was met by his servants; certainly this must have special significance or it would not have been added. Perhaps the servants represent the prophets and apostles who testify to Jesus Christ. They are the messengers of the church, who through Scripture and through preaching over and over assure us of the truth of what we have not yet fully believed. The Biblical message comes down through the ages to greet us as we walk the road of life, declaring ever afresh that life is not tragic after all, but that death has been overcome in a great day that we did not see for ourselves.

The Evangelist's emphasis on the exact time element indicates that a decision was once and for all made

and was instantly put into effect even while we were unconscious of it. We live after the earthly day of Jesus Christ; we can only believe because the Scriptures tell us. Time and space, life and death, have been overleaped by the almighty authority of our Lord. *He spoke*, and it was done!

Even as for the official whose son's life was restored, the decision has been made for us. Already, in effect, sin and death have been conquered. We may rest ourselves in his invisible victory. In our case, before ever we were born, Christ had triumphed over all that threatens us. Therefore we ourselves may believe and, with us, our households. What we have not seen or really believed, the church continually comes to tell us.

7

COMPASSION AND ACCUSATION

Read *John*, ch. 5.

THE Fourth Gospel now springs into swift-moving action. The healing of the official's son is immediately followed by another miracle—Jesus heals a man who for thirty-eight years had been waiting for his chance to be cured by the bubbling up of the water in the wondrous pool. Unlike the case of the official's son, this miracle immediately leads to extreme controversy; the lengthy and heated exchange of words is a part of the *action*. We see the coming doom of Jesus clearly foretold in the argument with the Jewish leaders. What Jesus *does* and what he has to *say* in his own defense are to be taken together as we consider the mounting tension of the narrative.

The Love of God in Action

We cannot pause long over the details of the miracle. Little or nothing is known of the healing pool and the beliefs attached to it. We may, however, quickly note two points.

The lame man in this story is friendless. The Fourth Gospel strongly emphasizes the point. "I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." (v. 7.) Thus the *humanitarian* aspect of the miracle is not to be overlooked. Jesus is the friend of the friendless. He is the one who takes action when there is no one else to do so. He intervenes in a man's behalf, when others have intervened to prevent the man from

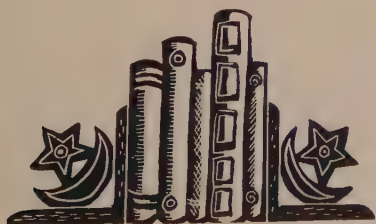
getting the help he needs. This compassion element in the miracle, already noted in connection with the healing of the official's son, is characteristic of the works of Jesus told about in the Fourth Gospel. The love of God, incarnate in Jesus, voluntarily comes to the rescue of a man who in this case has not even asked Jesus to assist him.

Another point should be noted: In the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah is associated with the kind of miracles that Jesus did. In *Isa. 35: 6*, it is said, "Then shall the lame man leap like a hart." There are similar references elsewhere in the Old Testament, and other examples of restoration of the infirm (such as the blind) are offered as signs by which to recognize the great Messianic time. Thus, in the Gospels, when Jesus comes forward to make the lame walk and the blind see, he is pointing to himself as the One by whose all-powerful word wrong things are made right. The imperfections of humanity are the troubles to which he addresses himself. These occasional signs, benefiting only a few at the moment, tell us that One is at hand whose purpose it is to redeem everything amiss in the world. Moreover, in this case, the voice of Christ takes over; and the miraculous pool, whatever its powers, is superseded by the Lord himself.

The Crux of the Controversy

Immediately after we learn that the lame man took up his bed and walked, we are informed that "that day was the sabbath" (*John 5: 9*). Jesus' disregard of traditional Sabbath laws was, as we well know, a frequent cause of controversy according to the first three Gospels. Once again we have a story in which Jesus' enemies make the point that the Jews persecuted Jesus because he did this miracle on the Sabbath. (See *vs. 10-11, 16*.)

The controversy concerns more than Sabbath-breaking. Jesus answers in the fateful words, "My





LIVING CHRIST, by Betti Richard

Father is working still, and I am working" (v. 17). This is a much greater claim than the one recorded by Mark, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). The Jews understand instantly what Jesus is claiming. As God's activity is continuous, not stopping even for the Sabbath, so Jesus justifies his action on the ground that he is equal with the Father. The question of the Sabbath as such thus disappears from sight, overshadowed by the apparent blasphemy that has been uttered.

"My Father is working still, and I am working." This has been the text for many a Labor Day sermon to show the excellence and dignity of work. The point, however, does not have to do with the value of work but with the right of Jesus to work continuously and in the same way as God himself. This is the claim that recurs in the Fourth Gospel until the bitterness engendered by it brings Christ to the cross. Jesus, as it were, digs his own grave by claiming to be precisely what he is.

Too often it has been assumed, even by Christians, that Jesus was killed because he made himself obnoxious to the authorities by his embarrassing ethical teachings. It has been assumed that Jesus went to the cross because he was a bold prophet, speaking fearlessly to the issues of his day. He certainly spoke to those issues in a way that would not be well received, but John makes crystal clear what *the* issue was—the great gulf that divided Jesus from his adversaries and indeed confused his own disciples. He died, not be-

cause he was a man of God, but because he said explicitly, as well as by implication, that he was God incarnate.

Jesus Defends Himself

Jesus at this point launches into a lengthy discourse obviously sensing, and undoubtedly having anticipated, the anger of his adversaries. In the first part of this discourse (John 5:19-29), Jesus defends himself in face of the tremendous hostility he has stirred up. The first verses (vs. 19-24) seek, among other things, to refute any charge that he is making a kind of egotistical claim. He is not a second God, but the Son of God. He does not act independently of the Father, but rather reflects and carries into effect God's will, not on his own, but as a true Son of the Father. As the Son he knows the Father and is therefore in a position to do those good things which the Father is ever seeking to achieve. His works do not come from his knowledge of God. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel." (v. 20.) It is the love of the Father for his Son that enables Jesus to accomplish these great works.

Jesus' "defense" of himself quickly turns into a repeated, more vehement, and explicit assertion of what was already implied when he said, "My Father is working still, and I am working." Jesus tells these Jews that they must honor the Son of God just as they honor the Father. Men will be judged by the decision of faith they make in respect to Jesus Christ. In respect to honoring God, it is not permissible to make some distinction between the Son and the Father (see v. 23). The Son of God, who is Jesus, is not just a representative of God's will, the embodiment of divine virtue or the like. He is to be treated, in his person, as God himself should be treated. We who read are reminded that the word "incarnation" is more than a mere figure of speech.

The warnings of judgment, offensive as they were to his hearers at the time, are quite subordinate to the positive promises that Jesus makes on this occasion. The clue to this whole section of the chapter is, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will" (v. 21). This thought is expanded in v. 24, where we are told that whoever hears Jesus' word and through that word believes in God has already passed from death to life. This is then expanded even more in vs. 25-29, in which Jesus relates this promise to the raising of the dead from their tombs. It is the function of God to give life in this world and in the next. Thus it is an extreme claim indeed for Jesus to associate himself with the activity of God in giving such life. Even those who are already in the grave will hear the voice—the voice of Jesus Christ, and, hearing it, come forth to face judgment. More than this he could hardly claim.

Jesus is not representing himself as a superman; on the contrary, he is speaking as a man of flesh and

and who is, however, the Son of God. His hearers must decide what to make of him, what to do about him, whether to accept or reject him. Jesus, after having previously referred to himself as the Son of God, refers to himself as the Son of Man (v. 27). Eternal life is to be given upon hearing his words and believing the words spoken by his lips of flesh and blood, not by the mysterious voice from heaven. The life-giving knowledge of God, of which we are to hear more again, is to be found in Jesus of Nazareth. Faith has to do with his person and his words. He is not just the great glory and adornment of the whole Biblical message: he is the One to whom all Scripture points, and the One who makes Scripture come alive. But in saying so, Jesus has already sealed his doom; and it is in doing so that he is giving the fatal offense to his adversaries, that brings to mankind the knowledge of the Father.

The Accusers Accused

Jesus vehemently takes the offensive and criticizes the Jews' interpretation of Scripture. (See vs. 30-47.) In this opponents, Jesus stands before them as a blasphemer who takes the law into his own hands and who makes himself equal with God. This would appear to be entirely contrary to their understanding of Scripture (that is, Old Testament Scripture).

But Jesus tells them that they have *misunderstood* the Scriptures. Moreover, it is not merely an intellectual misunderstanding, for he says, "I know that you have not the love of God within you" (v. 42). Notice Jesus refers to glory. He says: "I do not receive glory from men. . . . How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" (Vs. 41, 44.) Thus Jesus accuses his hearers of missing the point of the Scriptures in which they revel. To them the Scriptures are the glory of Israel, which enables them to glorify themselves as representatives of Israel. What they have *not* found in Scripture is the knowledge and love of God. Had they read the Scriptures aright, they could have known who Jesus was when they encountered him.

Jesus' claim is no more self-evident to us than it was to his opponents. Surely, we think, the Old Testament can be read as a thing in itself, a documentation of the history of a great religion. We are prepared to believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecies of that Scripture, but *in what way* is it plain that Jesus Christ was made known through them? How does all that is recorded in the Old Testament lead inevitably to this man, Jesus of Nazareth?

Perhaps the most modest answer we can make, and the one we should make, is an expression of thankfulness that we were not alive when Jesus was on earth. Could *we* really have known him? Would it have been fair to us that the religion in which we had been brought up pointed plainly to this man as the Son of God? We are the beneficiaries of many centuries of faith and tradition. We have been nurtured in the be-

lief that the New Testament does indeed fulfill the old. But are we so sensitive that we would have recognized him? Can we do otherwise than give thanks that we were not put to that test? Can we be otherwise than relieved that we were not called upon to interpret Jesus' mighty acts, to see them as signs of who he was?

Fortunately for us, we were not in that position of decision. The decisions of faith that we ourselves must make are supported by the testimony of the apostles and of the church ever since the apostolic age. What will our situation be, if we are casual about this testimony, if we take the Scriptures lightly? What will our position be, if in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New we find only what seems to us an historical record of what happened long ago—and not the voice of him who will call forth the dead from their tombs to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of judgment?

"Active in the Church"

There is, in our country, a notable return to religion since the war. It is a movement which no one should underestimate or belittle. When men and women stream into the churches, whatever the reasons which bring them there, the churches have a great opportunity to preach the gospel. But the gospel—that is, the good news of God, about what he has done for the world in Christ—is not the same thing as religion. It not only does not depend on religion but may even run counter to it. For religion is the sum total of all those practices, ideas, and feelings whereby we human beings try to connect ourselves with God. . . .

It is natural that when we are insecure, uncertain of ourselves and our world, we should try to connect ourselves with God. It is natural that we, in our American society, should go to church to do so. But all of these actions, beliefs, and feelings are after all things which *we* do. If we make the mistake of imagining that big church memberships, active programs, many prayer meetings, or big revivals are God's salvation, we are preparing the way for catastrophic disappointment. For the first thing God asks of us is not to be religious but to hear what *he* has done for his world and to obey him by sharing in what he is doing today and tomorrow. After this he may or may not want us to be "active in the church." He may or may not endow us with religious feelings. But he will certainly want us to study the record of his acts in history, as it is found in the Bible, and to act in our church and in our world, by both prayer and work, in the light of it.

—Charles C. West.

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LOAVES AND FISHES—FLESH AND BLOOD

Read *John*, ch. 6.

THE sixth chapter of John has many parts. Here we find: (1) Another mighty act of Jesus, the feeding of the multitude with the loaves and fishes. (2) The desire of the multitude to make Jesus a king, and Jesus' withdrawal from the crowd. (3) Jesus walking on the sea, in the night of terror and comfort. (4) The lengthy discourse of Jesus on the meaning of the food that he provided. (5) Resistance to the idea that man must eat of Jesus' flesh and blood. (6) Abandonment of Jesus by many of his followers, leaving only the twelve; and the prophecy of his betrayal by Judas.

The Miracle of the Feeding

If *ch. 5* brings into the open the controversy that will lead Jesus to the cross, *ch. 6* describes the watershed of Jesus' career. At the beginning of the chapter a multitude is following Jesus. By the time the chapter is over the multitude has forsaken him, and except for the dubious support of the twelve disciples, he must go on alone to Calvary. Ironically, this chain of events is set into motion by Jesus' compassion for the crowd.

The crowd has followed him because they have seen what he has done for the diseased. (*V. 2.*) Apparently they are willing to be led by him. So many have come after him into the hills that Jesus is provided with an immediate problem of physical human need. How is the hungry multitude to be fed? No solution seems practicable. (*Vs. 5-7.*) There is, however, infinite comfort for the Christian in the statement that "he [Jesus] himself knew what he would do." Christ has already solved the insoluble problem in his own mind and is at the point of taking action. So great is God's mercy that even in unbelief humanity will be served.

As is usual in John, the details of the story represent important theological truths. How many church school lessons have been taught, and sermons preached, designed to show what could result from a little boy sharing his meager supply of bread and fish! Manifestly, the significance of this detail is that Christ can perform a miracle even with such pitifully inadequate means as these. Another element in the account should not be overlooked, namely, Jesus' insistence that the fragments left over be gathered up; these fragments filled twelve baskets. "Twelve" is, of course, the number of the disciples. The significance of this touch in the narrative is explained in this fashion: "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day" (*v. 39*). Those who are given to Christ by the Father will not be lost.

The crowd greets this sign with enormous enthusiasm; the popular opinion is confirmed. "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" (*V. 14*). Here, then, comes the watershed. "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself." (*V. 15*.) Jesus will not submit to being hailed as the kind of Messiah traditionally expected by his people. The enthusiastic response is not for him; he will have none of it. The meaning of the miracle has been misunderstood, and Jesus, as it were, flees from those who would follow him as a "leader." Never again would the multitude be on his side. "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him." (*V. 66*.) This was inevitable; Jesus' Kingship, *his hour of glory*, would be established in his death.

Night Upon the Water

Jesus withdraws from the crowds to the hills, and the disciples begin their trip back across the lake to Capernaum without him. Then, after a day of wonder the disciples see what is apparently a phantom on the sea, giving rise to a night of terror. This is one direction that men's reaction to the miraculous can take. It can become a sense of awe in the presence of the supernatural. It can become sheer superstition. In the nighttime of their misunderstanding, the disciples see Jesus approaching them on the water; they fear this terrifying figure. Quickly, however, they are assured that this reaction to Jesus' presence is unfounded.

The reassurance comes to them in the words, "It is I; do not be afraid." The Greek expression here, translated "It is I," is used at several dramatic junctures in the Fourth Gospel and, actually, cannot be translated in a way that brings out its real force. Sometimes it is translated "I am he," as, for instance, in the scene at Gethsemane when, on being told that the soldiers seek Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus replies, "I am



(*ch. 18: 4-6*). In one case the expression is rendered simply, "I am"; "Before Abraham was, I am" (*v. 8: 58*).

This last rendering is the most literal and really brings out the point. For this is the majestic and mysterious I AM of the Old Testament (*Ex. 3: 14*). In the same words with which he identifies himself as Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord also declares himself the God. That is why the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus fell to the ground in terror. Jesus told them that he was the very man they were looking for, yet he did so in a form of language that told them also that they were being confronted with Almighty God.

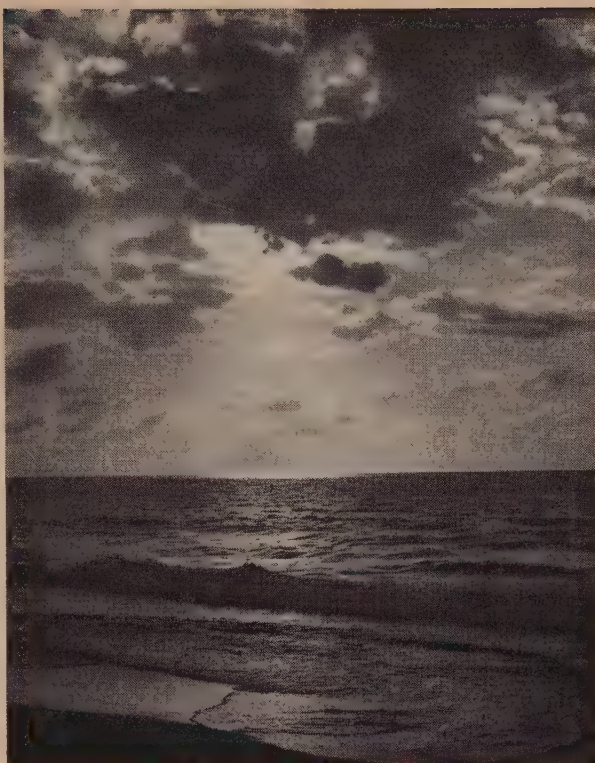
The situation is reversed in the story of the walking on the sea. Whereas the disciples first trembled before what they thought was a supernatural appearance, they were comforted to learn that the God before them was none but the lowly carpenter of Galilee.

The account of the night at sea ends with this statement: "Immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going" (*v. 21*). This has been related by various commentators to *v. 30* from *Ps. 107*: "And he brought them to their desired haven."

The Flesh and Blood of the Sacrament

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the long discourse (*John 6: 25-65*) refers to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For one thing, the subject matter of this discourse, in which Jesus says that the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood are necessary in order to gain eternal life, would seem to have a very close relationship indeed to the understanding of the elements of the Sacrament. Moreover, it is a striking fact that the Fourth Gospel gives no account of the institution of the Lord's Supper during the Last Supper. It is therefore usually supposed that *ch. 6* provides John's equivalent to the sacramental passages in the other Gospels. Furthermore, if one looks back to the account of the feeding of the multitude, certain details make on sacramental significance. We are told in *v. 4*, for example, that the Passover was at hand. It is unlikely that so careful a writer as John would have mentioned this unless he meant it to convey something of importance. And in the story of the feeding there is considerable stress on giving thanks; it should be recalled that the term "Eucharist," a synonym for the Lord's Supper, comes from a Greek term used to describe thanksgiving.

As we get into the discourse referred to, Jesus' claims for his flesh and blood become almost extravagantly expressed. In the early part of it (*vs. 25-34*) the people were satisfied to accept the idea of bread as symbolical and to connect it up simply with the spiritual message of Jesus. Indeed, they said to Jesus, "Lord, give us this bread always." When, however, Jesus says that *he* is the bread of life, skepticism begins to mount. A spiritual message is one thing; but to claim that he himself is the bread of life is another, and this arouses the murmuring reaction noted in *vs. 41-*

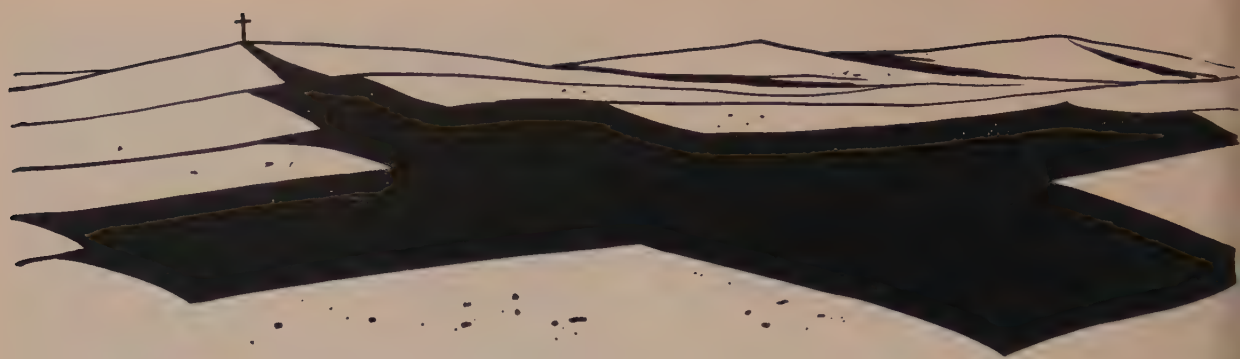


42. It is at *v. 51* that we have a transition to the part of the discourse that is clearly related to the Sacrament: "And the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." This utterance is found offensive, and Jesus makes the situation still more tense by introducing what seems a somewhat crude expression. In *v. 54*, the word translated "eats" really means "munch." That is to say, Jesus is underlining the fact that men must eat his flesh as animals eat, in a very obviously physical way. This undoubtedly transfers the thought to the eating of the elements at the Lord's Supper, and it is hard to escape thinking that this is consciously a factor in the discourse.

Yet this is not to be understood in a superstitious way. Jesus guards against taking his words in a purely literal manner. (See *vs. 61-63*.) The merit of his flesh and blood is found in believing him, not in going through some rite similar to pagan practices. Moreover, even his flesh is of no avail apart from faith evoked by the words that he has spoken. "It is the spirit that gives life"—recalling Jesus' statement to the woman of Samaria about the nature of true worship. Nevertheless, he has clearly said that participation in his flesh and blood, presumably through partaking of the Sacrament, is the way to eternal life.

Without Death, No Flesh and Blood

We ought not to imagine that this is a passage dealing primarily with the virtues of the sacramental elements. There is something that must precede the possibility of having the Sacrament at all—and that is the death of Christ. In this discourse Jesus recognizes



his death as necessary for the redemption of man, and then points to partaking of the Sacrament as the way of entering into the eternal life that he has died to make available. In other words, we do not begin with the Sacrament and work back to the death of Christ; rather, we begin with Christ's self-sacrifice and then participate in the Sacrament through faith, with the expectation that the grace of Christ's self-giving will be once again offered us. It is not the bread and wine of the Sacrament that bring salvation in themselves. On the contrary, it is the dying flesh of Jesus that is the power of God unto salvation, because Christ is the incarnate Word of God who can fulfill his destiny only in dying. Toward the end of this discourse, Jesus notes again, as we have observed, that "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." He who has preached to the people is he who dies to give the possibility of eternal life to them. The preaching and the dying, the proclamation and the practical redemption, are all part of one great action of God. And the human reaction to this is unbelief.

Faithfulness and Betrayal

As already noted, many of Jesus' followers forsook him at this point. The concluding words of this tremendous sixth chapter indicate what a watershed it is in Jesus' life. Even as he had withdrawn from the people into the hills when the people sought to make

of him a false Messiah, so the people withdraw from him when he explains what it would mean for him to be the true Messiah—that is, the Suffering Servant. Over against the majority of the Jews we see the twelve disciples continuing to profess faith in Christ. Interestingly, even this faithfulness of the disciples has a slightly negative ring to it, for although Peter says that they have believed and have come to know that Jesus is "the Holy One of God," he begins with what almost sounds like a sense of confusion: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Besides, in *v. 70*, Jesus emphasizes that he *chose* them. It was not of man's initiative, but of God's, that these Twelve should have their destiny bound up with Christ.

This same verse and the one following end the chapter on a most sinister note. One of the disciples, says Jesus, "is a devil." Then we are told that Jesus was speaking of Judas, who "was to *betray* him."

It is still an anonymous prospect, for Judas is not yet named. A chill descends upon the hearts of the disciples, there is a threat impending, and Jesus has warned that all is not well within the household of faith. One day the traitor will be known by his name. It will be in a particular act, and an act done by a particular person, that treason will be committed. When Jesus has been betrayed from within the circle of discipleship, his flesh will be consumed for the salvation of the world.

9

A MAN OF CONTROVERSY

Read *John 7: 1-13, 32-36; 8: 12-20, 48-59.*

GREAT events, great declarations, and great decisions have been recorded in the sixth chapter of John. This may not have been evident before, but it is perfectly clear now: Jesus will fulfill his destiny only by dying. He has turned his back on the role of the traditional Messiah—a man of earthly glory—and consequently has been rejected by the people. They

will not accept him as a Messiah who redeems the world by his death.

The die is cast. Appropriately in the dramatic structure of John, *chs. 7 and 8* reflect the chaos that ensued. In these chapters we have a vast amount of conversation and controversy, all of which intensifies the sense of impending doom. More and more, Jesus becomes the focal point for human hatred.

At this time he is not passive in the face of the con-

controversy swirling around him. He answers back with the utmost vigor; and he throws in additional declarations about himself that make matters worse. These chapters may appear confused, but we can quickly discover their unity in the theme that prevails through all these various passages. The theme is, of course, the person and work of Jesus Christ himself. For purposes of study, we shall confine ourselves to selections from these chapters, which will give us the flavor of the controversy and indicate ever more clearly what the controversy is all about.

Crucified at Jerusalem

Chapter 7 begins with the account of Jesus' refusing to go to a feast at Jerusalem at the request of his brothers and then actually going privately (*vs. 1-13*). It was an important feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, combining thanksgiving for the harvest with commemoration of God's acts of old when the Jews were wandering in the wilderness. At the feast tents were erected, and it is from this practice that the feast derives its name.

Jesus' brothers, who in the Fourth Gospel are represented as unbelievers, are anxious for him to leave Galilee and go to Jerusalem, there to display his miracles. We know from all the Gospels that it was repugnant to Jesus to "prove" who he was by mighty works and so are not surprised to read that Jesus characteristically declines the challenge. We hear again the voice of him who withdrew from the crowd when he perceived that the multitude would make him a king. Jesus says, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here." (*V. 6.*) This is one of those cryptic references to Jesus' "time," or "hour," which is to be the moment of his glorification. As we have already learned, this "time" is the time of humiliation and death. In the world, by its standards, a man's "time" would be the time of his success and recognition. Quite the opposite is true with Jesus. Therefore, he elects to go to the feast "not publicly but in private" (*v. 10*). He has previously said (*v. 8*) that he was not going to the feast, that is, he was not going up *with the intention* of dying. Most certainly he was not going up with the intention of astonishing the mob by the performance of spectacular miracles. When *his* time came, it would be at another feast, and what happened then would be once and for all decisive. Meantime, he is content to go privately to Jerusalem and endure the discussion that increasingly centered around him as the most talked about and least understood person in Judea.

The Journeys of Jesus

Although there was no ground swell of enthusiasm about Jesus, such as had led the crowd to think of making him their king (in *ch. 6*), nevertheless there were still those among the multitude who went so far as to say, "He is a good man" (*ch. 7: 12*). This "muttering" about Jesus disturbed the authorities; indeed,

we find the authorities shortly deciding to arrest him. (*Vs. 32-36.*) Why this was not accomplished is not explained, except on the ground that Jesus did not wish to be arrested yet, seeing that his hour "has not yet come." Jesus responds to the effort to arrest him by saying that he will be with them "a little longer" (*v. 33*), and then "go to him who sent me." Then he adds the enigmatic saying, "You will seek me and you will not find me; where I am you cannot come" (*v. 34*).

Jesus' words can easily be interpreted in terms of flight; presumably he was going to the "Dispersion among the Greeks." This "Dispersion" has reference, of course, to the growing Jewish community outside Palestine, in the Greek-speaking world. Presumably Jesus must be intending to take refuge in that community, becoming there a teacher of the Greeks. His adversaries cannot imagine *what* he means by saying that they will seek him and not find him, and that where he is they cannot come.

Jesus actually refers to the fact of his eventual death and resurrection. Far from taking flight, he will in his own time come and submit to the death that the authorities have in store for him. His departure is thus not a departure *from them*, but a departure *from this world*—at their hands! He will not *go* from them, but on the contrary will *come* to them, that his hour may be fulfilled. Yet, in this act he will with great finality go from them, to return to his Father. Had Jesus' foes understood his meaning, they might have taken comfort from the thought that his time on earth was short. Yet had they understood it in all its depth, they would have been chilled by how little time there was left for the Jewish people to discover their Messiah. These words about seeking him and not finding him echo *Isa. 55: 6*: "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."

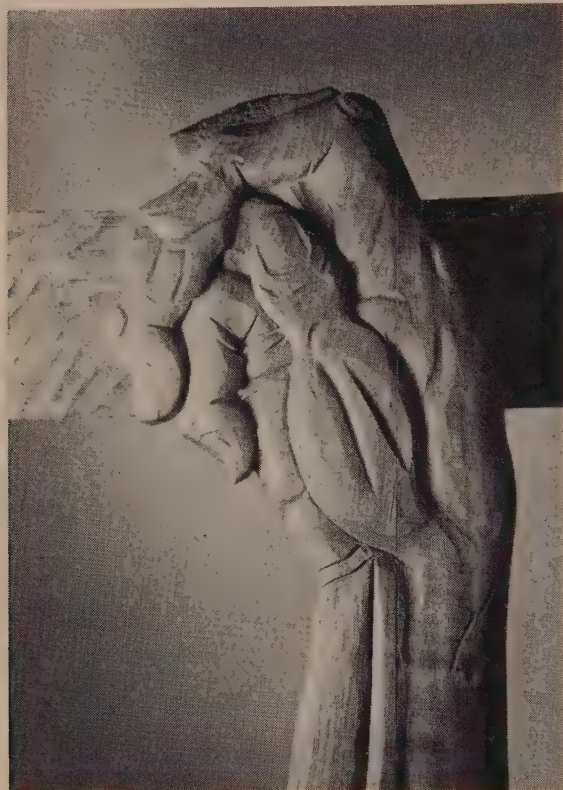
Although the surmise about him fleeing to the "Dispersion among the Greeks" is wide of the mark so far as Jesus' intended meaning is concerned, yet, as at other points in the Fourth Gospel, the adversaries of Jesus were true prophets. When he has made that fateful journey, not away from them but toward them, to be killed, then his mission will spread from the Jewish people to the Greek world, and indeed to the ends of the earth. Thus, although he has no intention at the moment of looking for safety in the outside world, what he proposes to let happen to him in Jerusalem will enable him to reign over the entire globe. Taken in conjunction with Paul's strategy of turning from the Jews to the Gentiles, this passage becomes exceedingly prophetic, even though it was uttered by Jesus' enemies in ignorance and misunderstanding.

We have, then, three journeys of Jesus spoken of, as it were, in one breath. Jesus will go from the present situation to the final passover of his own humiliation and death. In doing so, he will go to his Father, and so triumph precisely through the apparent victory of his adversaries over him. Finally, this movement of Jesus toward his Father, through death and resurrec-

tion, will actually turn out to be a journey into all the world.

Egotism or Truth?

As we move on (*ch. 8: 12-20*) we come immediately upon the saying much beloved by Christians. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." (*V. 12.*) The mysterious "I am" expression embedded in these words should warn us, after the last article, to go slowly in determining exactly what Jesus means. Jesus is not



HAND OF CRUCIFIXION RESIGNATION
By Nicolaus Koni

merely describing what he is in a general way: he is characterizing himself by introducing, as he so often does in the Fourth Gospel, the unspeakable name of God, taken from the Old Testament—"I AM." How closely this is associated with the idea of witness that is developed in these verses can be seen from *Isa. 43: 8-13*, where true witness has reference to the fact that "I am He," and "Before me no god was formed nor shall there be any after me" (*v. 10*). *Verses 11 and 13* further reinforce this thought.

Jesus enlightens the world, not just by profound and true ethical teachings, but by being what he is—God incarnate. The world is enlightened by recognizing Jesus in his true divine character.

The Jewish adversaries in this discussion may or

may not have picked up the subtlety of Jesus' words. They are, however, clearly offended by his bearing witness to himself (*John 8: 13*). In rebuttal Jesus draws upon the principle of justice laid down in *Deut. 19: 15*, requiring two witnesses in order to establish evidence. His sayings, which appear merely egotistical and presumptuous, not to say blasphemous, to his foes, are validated by the fact that he does not stand alone. Jesus goes on to say that God is always with him, and the Father himself bears witness to his Son. (*John 8: 17-18.*) In what way the Father bears witness to Jesus is not stated. Here is where faith comes into play. Unlike the innumerable persons who have claimed in some sense to be messianic, Jesus can make unlimited claims concerning himself because to the eyes of faith God is revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. When the enemies demand to know, "Where is your Father?" (*v. 19*), Jesus once again, in effect, accuses the very religious Jews of not knowing God at all. Where Jesus is, there is the Father; and where the Father is, knowledge of him is accessible only through Jesus Christ. That is Christian faith. No objective proof can be offered in this controversy—no proof except the authentic knowledge of God that comes by faith alone.

The Eternal Jesus

In the final passage of this epic chapter that we have chosen for study, Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am" (*v. 58*). This is the crux of his argument and it also is a puzzling saying. How could the man Jesus of Nazareth, have existed before Abraham? I Jesus claiming to be a supernatural being and not really a man at all in the ordinary sense of the term.

The decisive expression is, once more, I AM. If Jesus was really God incarnate, then he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The *Godliness* of Jesus is eternal. There can be no question of any change in his nature, and what he was on earth—"full of grace and truth"—he always was, eternally. Even to say "He always was," is misleading, because we cannot express in temporal terms, especially in the *past* tense of a verb, what eternity, the eternity of God, really is.

Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day, for he saw the grace and truth of God. He heard the promises and followed the call. Abraham saw and heard substantially what Jesus of Nazareth was in the days of his flesh. This required no vision of the future on Abraham's part. Instead, Abraham knew God, which is the same thing as knowing Jesus Christ. The God he knew was *and is* one with the Son of God.

For such blasphemy the adversaries of Christ again set out to destroy him. But since we have been told that the hour of Jesus' death was not yet at hand, it was inevitable that he should escape. He had once again, by his eventful words, made certain that he would at length die; but he would die in his own time, which was identical with God's time.



Philadelphia Museum of Art

THE CRUCIFIXION, by *Georges Rouault*

LIGHT FOR THE BLIND

Read *John*, ch. 9.

THE swirling tides of controversy in *chs.* 7 and 8 sweep us on into another of the mighty *acts*, or signs, of Jesus. This fresh act is the healing of the man born blind, told in a very lively fashion and more elaborately than any of the preceding miracles.

Jesus arouses the anger of the Pharisees in this incident because he performs an act of healing on the Sabbath Day. But the Sabbath issue, faced in earlier controversies, is not really the point of this story. By this time it is clear that the Pharisees are furious with Jesus on general principles and that anything he does is likely to excite their anger further. Every word and deed of his testifies afresh to his claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God. In this very vividly written chapter, Jesus' foes seek in part to take out their frustration on the man who was healed; and in doing so they force him into a confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ. With bitter words between Jesus and the Pharisees, the chapter ends, thrusting the whole action of the Fourth Gospel one stage nearer to its climax in the death of Jesus.

New Creation

In the first three Gospels there are a number of accounts of Jesus' healing the blind (among others, *Mark* 8:22-26; 10:46-52; *Matt.* 20:29-34; *Luke* 18:35-43). Such healings are important, not merely because they were humane, but also because they fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament concern-

ing the work of the Messiah (for example, *Isa.* 29:18; 35:5; and other passages). "Light" is a dominant characteristic of the Messianic hope, as in the words of *Isa.* 60:1: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." This verse is immediately followed by reference to the darkness that will cover the earth in contrast to the light rising in the darkness that will attract all nations. The sense of physical eyesight for the blind and enlightenment amidst ignorance and sin are blended in such prophecies. Thus, when the Gospels record miracles of healing blind men, they are to be understood not merely in the immediate physical sense, but also as signs showing that Jesus is the Messiah and, furthermore, is himself the dawning of the light of faith.

The man in the story that John tells in *ch.* 9 was "blind from his birth." There was, as it were, a defectiveness in his first creation, and Jesus not merely heals him but makes him the man he was intended to be. The reference to making clay (*v.* 6) may well be reminiscent of the creation of man from the dust. This man becomes not merely capable of physical sight, but a *new being*. To put this interpretation on the incident is by no means farfetched, for in early Christianity light is the symbol of conversion to Christianity. Those who have dwelt in the darkness of sin are led forth into the light of God's presence. That this meaning is integral to the chapter under discussion is shown by the elaborate way in which the man is forced into a confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Life becomes different for him, not only physically, but by virtue of his having found his Messiah.

Many words have been written about the peculiar question of the disciples, in *v.* 2, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Could the man himself have been punished for his sin by the curse of blindness if he was in fact blind from birth? There were various theories among the Jews explaining illness and suffering as the result of past sin—committed by the individual or by his parents. We shall probably never know the precise meaning that the disciples had in mind, which is a pity in view of the precision and deliberate intentions of every phrase used in the Fourth Gospel. In any case, the significance of *v.* 2 is much less than the meaning of Jesus' answer. Not only does Jesus repudiate in effect the common theory that physical maladies are a punishment for specific sins, but he asserts that the reason for this man's blindness from birth was "that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (*v.* 3). Jesus is speaking of the new creation. He is speaking of his



own capability of proving himself to be "the light of the world." The sense of impending doom is not absent even from these verses, for we are reminded of the coming night when no man can work—doubtless a reference to the Passion and death of Christ.

Thus, although Jesus does indeed perform a humanitarian deed in this miracle, the primary significance of it is to point to himself as the light and the life of men. Once more we have, not a miracle that can be taken by itself, but a *sign* that points to Jesus Christ as the author of the new creation.

Conversion and Confession

The remainder of the chapter is elaborately developed. It traces the process by which the man born blind came to recognize, and acknowledge, the person who had endowed him with sight. There was a considerable uproar about this miracle, and the man is repeatedly cross-examined. He first says somewhat guardedly that "the man called Jesus" performed this; and he disclaims any knowledge of where Jesus is (*vs. 11-12*). The next stage is reached when the man, asked to characterize Jesus, says, "He is a prophet" (*v. 17*).

The man then takes a further step. (*Vs. 24-27*.) The Pharisees tell him to praise God, but they also tell him that the person who opened his eyes was a sinner. At this time the man is becoming bolder in his repartee and answers in what must have appeared an insolent fashion: "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." When the Pharisees press him further on how this happened, he retorts with questions that show his awareness that Jesus is indeed to be taken seriously: "Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples?" In the verses immediately following, the man shows his willingness to pursue the argument by pointing out how little the Pharisees evidently know about Jesus and, also, that whereas God does not listen to sinners, he evidently listened to Jesus. "Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind" (*v. 32*) confirms the impression of the opening of the chapter: that what is displayed in this sign is the new creation.

The conversation is not concluded here. The man goes farther than he has yet dared to go, saying, "If this man were not *from God*, he could do nothing" (*v. 33*). This response leads the Pharisees to cast him out of the synagogue, that is, excommunicate him (*v. 34*). The inclusion of this reference in the narrative reveals the utter break that has taken place, by the time the Gospel was written, between Christianity and Judaism.

The final stage in the man's recognition of what has happened comes when Jesus seeks him out, as described in *vs. 35-38*. Jesus puts to him point-blank the question of whether he believes in the Son of Man and eventually evokes the response of pure faith,



THE CRUCIFIXION, by Nicolaus Koni

"Lord, I believe." At this point it is stated that the former blind man *worshiped* Jesus. (*V. 38*.)

Thus, in the conversations that followed the miraculous deed, the man moves from mere recognition of the human Jesus to the idea that Jesus must be a prophet, to the assertion that he is sent from God (contrary to the views of the Pharisees), and finally to Christian faith, which acknowledges Jesus Christ as the person he truly is.

The Progress of Faith

Living as we do in a community whose traditions are predominantly Christian, it is hard for us to realize that there are those in the world today who must decisively make a break with their former religious beliefs in order to "stand up for Jesus." In our American society it would require boldness to say a word against Christianity! We do well to remember the persons in other societies throughout the world who must in various ways suffer because they have confessed their faith in Christ.

Nevertheless, this account of the man born blind speaks to us in many meaningful ways. If the essence of Christian faith is illumination that brings new life, we might profitably inquire of ourselves whether our faith is real or merely conventional. Are we simply conforming to the Christian tradition in which we have been brought up, or does our faith express what we have actually known of Jesus Christ as he presents himself to us in the Scriptures and in the church?

But perhaps this kind of question is too intimate

for discussion. Moreover, few if any of us would claim to show forth in ourselves the new creation envisioned by the New Testament. In any case, what we ought to explore is not so much what we *feel* as what we *do*.

Even from a purely intellectual point of view, there is a vast difference between the various terms that the former blind man applied to Jesus at different stages in the conversation; and these differences apply to modern thought about our Lord. First he called him simply "Jesus," then he ventured to describe him as a "prophet," next he went so far as to say that he was "from God," and only at long last did he respond with a confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah, Son of Man and Son of God, worthy to be worshiped. The first three expressions correspond to various respectful views of Jesus held by modern man. Some would treat him purely as the so-called "Jesus of history"; others would go on from there to profess confidence in him as a prophet. Indeed, the Moslems regard Jesus as a prophet! The term "from God" is ambiguous and can be used without definite commitment to a faith in the Christ whom the church confesses. In other words, this could express only the idea that he was an exceptionally holy man, whose wisdom, piety, and moral power connect him, in some undefined way, with God himself. All these views are intellectually respectable, are held by persons both inside and outside the church today, and in fact blur the distinction between faith and mere respect. The

audacious view that Jesus is the person described in the very first chapter of the Fourth Gospel is alone distinguishable as Christian faith. This does not necessarily mean that we ought to follow the example of the Pharisees in the story and cast out of the church everyone who does not measure up to our idea of the man of faith. Gentleness, patience, and understanding are required to bring children, youth, and adults along the path that leads at length to a full-blown confession of Christ. Yet let us not deceive ourselves by supposing that to be impressed by Jesus or to admire his moral stature and his achievements in history is the same thing as to have faith in him.

But, finally, we should remember that as the man born blind progressed toward faith he became bolder in his speech and attitudes. The nearer he came to believing in Jesus as the Christ, the less intimidated he was by the religious authorities who sought to bully him. Among the Gentile groups in Germany opposed to Hitler, a small minority of the church stood together in organized fashion and defied the Hitler regime. When, a few years ago in America, people stood in fear and trembling while civil liberties were mortally threatened by McCarthyism, the Presbyterian Church ventured to issue an official statement defying communism and McCarthyism alike. In so far as the progress of faith can be charted, daring to stand up and be counted is a sign of faith because it is a confessional deed. Courage is the badge of faith.

11

SHEPHERD AND SHEEP

Read *John*, ch. 10.

How gentle is our mental image of shepherds and sheep! At Christmas time we relax to the smoothly flowing melody of Handel's "He shall feed his flock."

The Bible is indeed full of references to sheep-herding. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." This passage, perhaps, has brought more comfort than any other to the Christian. Likewise, *John*, ch. 10, seems at first glance to be infinitely comforting and so much milder than the controversy that has preceded it in *chs. 7 to 9*.

It is a little startling, therefore, to realize that this chapter does not represent any new incident or any detached piece of teaching, but is in reality a part of the violent controversy of *ch. 9*. The man born blind, rejected by the authorities because of his belief in Christ, is among the sheep for whom Jesus, the Good Shepherd, assumes responsibility. Moreover, in the contrast that Jesus draws between himself and thieves, robbers, and hirelings, the controversy becomes more bitter than ever before.

The Shepherd and the Door

In the parable of the good shepherd Jesus mingles many thoughts comforting to the believer, but expressive of the latest and most brutal conflict between himself and his adversaries. At this point, in definite Old Testament language, Jesus declares his authority over the people of God by speaking of himself as the authentic shepherd of God's flock. In the same passage he describes himself as the door by which the flock gains access to God, thus anticipating his saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (*ch. 14: 6*).

Jesus does not hesitate to mix his metaphors, and this makes no difference. Indeed, it enhances the forcefulness of the passage. For it asserts, at one and the same time, that Jesus assumes personal and invincible responsibility for his own, and that his own will come to know their God only through the Protector who is prepared to lay down his life for his people. Although his listeners do not immediately understand what he is saying (*ch. 10: 6*), the conclusion of the chapter makes it clear that they know the impact of

THE CRY
By Edvard Munch



National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

his teaching well enough. They discern, without understanding, that Jesus has asserted nothing short of the authority of God himself. In case there is any doubt about it, Jesus plainly declares, "I and the Father are one" (v. 30).

The Shepherd in the Old Testament

The Old Testament makes wide use of the picture of the shepherd, whether this picture be applied to God himself (as in *Ps. 23* or *Isa. 40: 11*) or to those with spiritual responsibility for the people (as in the long and important passage about shepherds in *Ezek., ch. 34*). As is well-known, David himself, the ideal king of the Old Testament, was originally a shepherd boy. The hope of a perfect king who, like David, will be a true shepherd of his people, lies behind the expectation of the Messiah. Innumerable passages from the Old Testament could be cited to show how the concept of the shepherd is embedded in Old Testament thought. Jesus is, of course, picking up all this wealth of shepherd imagery in the Old Testament and applying it to himself. Here am I, he says in effect, the one true shepherd with the authority of God himself,

come at last to gather in the helpless sheep. It is very significant that the relationship of the shepherd to his sheep is that of authority on the shepherd's part and trust on the part of the sheep.

What the Old Testament does not explicitly say is that the characteristic of the true shepherd is that he will lay down his life for his sheep. Here we come once more upon the basic theme of the Fourth Gospel: *the necessity laid upon Jesus to sacrifice himself*. He is the one who cares absolutely and completely for his sheep. He lives with them and will die for them. He provides the way of access to salvation; their safety lies only in trusting in him and obeying his voice. He is not, however, entitled to their trust unless he is prepared to yield up his own life that the sheep may live. "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (*V. 11.*) Because of his intimacy with the sheep, because of his complete and absolute care for them—"I know my own and my own know me" (*v. 14*)—he will lay down his life.

Jesus himself soon underscores the voluntary nature of this sacrifice. (*Vs. 17-18.*) On first sight, it might appear that Jesus is here claiming some author-

ity independent of his Father: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." This he says concerning life itself. He does not thereby suggest that he is independent of God. His being and his will are so interwoven with the very being of the Father that, by voluntarily deciding to sacrifice himself, he is acting in absolute concord with the Father. Indeed, he goes on to say, "This charge I have received from my Father." Precisely because he is the Son of God, he is not a free agent. The independence of which he speaks is doubtless another kind of independence. He is independent of the world. He can save himself from death, as he repeatedly does when his foes seek to destroy him. (See, for example, *chs. 8: 59; 10: 31-39.*)

In a sense, he must die *because* he is God. He is not merely one more martyr among the various trains of martyrs, or one more hero in the long history of human heroism. The *love* of the Father for his flock, the care of the divine Shepherd for his sheep, is expressed only in an ultimate decision to submit to the hands of those who imagine they have authority over him. But their power to take away his life is an illusion. He decides when, where, and under what circumstances he will make this supreme sacrifice in behalf of those for whom he cares.

This aspect of shepherding was not specifically indicated in the Old Testament itself—except, of course, as one applies certain other passages (which speak of the Servant of God) to the idea of keeping sheep. The self-sacrifice of the shepherd, therefore, becomes the unexpected element. Jews were expecting a shepherd from the line of David, whose authority would lead the wholly dependent people of God into eternal life. They were not expecting such a shepherd as Jesus Christ.

The unexpectedness occurs again when Jesus says: "And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (*v. 16*). Here Jesus is looking beyond his death and resurrection to the outgoing of his mission to the ends of the world. He comes as the Jewish Messiah and, by virtue of his death, becomes the Shepherd of all who will believe in him. There are no limitations to the extent of his authority as the Good Shepherd, but it will be an authority secured by virtue of dying for the sheep.

The Bad Shepherds

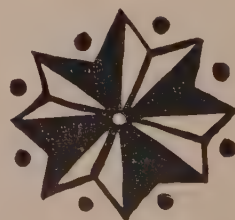
The pastoral tone of Jesus' description of himself in this passage must not blind us to the truly violent way in which he speaks of his adversaries. Here again Jesus mixes his metaphors. Early in the discourse he speaks of thieves and robbers whom the sheep will not heed, because they will not recognize unfamiliar voices. These thieves and robbers, whoever they may be, are those who break in from the outside and

frighten the sheep away. Then Jesus goes so far as to describe all who came before him as thieves and robbers. He does not, of course, refer to the great men of the Old Testament but to any who, even though they claim to speak with authority as to the Law, lead the sheep astray (*v. 8*). He is addressing the authorities among the Jewish people, remember, and is therefore saying in effect that all they have done is to cause havoc among the flock of God. To say this means that his subsequent remarks about dying for the sheep are not merely romantic sentiments, for these insults to the authorities once again serve to seal his doom. Not content with this insult, Jesus goes on to speak of these leaders as hirelings, in the business for what they can get out of it, and thus certain to show cowardice when the sheep are in danger. They will protect *themselves*, but not the sheep put in their charge.

As if this were not enough, Jesus adds a saying of exceptional interest: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep" (*vs. 25-26*). Thus, although earlier he has prophesied that his mission will go to the ends of the earth (*v. 16*), he excludes these present unbelievers who are not only bad shepherds but, actually, are not even legitimate sheep. They have nothing to do with him, and he has nothing to do with them. They do not belong.

Not to belong—either as true shepherds or true sheep! In this day of "togetherness" we ought to be able to appreciate the force of this saying. We are much preoccupied with the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission; but here and there we receive alarming notices to the effect that there are those who will be *excluded*. Who can say who these will be? This is not a matter for mortal judgment. We could almost say that Jesus' own words tempt us to make decisions about the insiders and the outsiders and to leap to conclusions about *those others* whom we would consider outside the fold.

The right effect of such sayings, however, should be to put us on the alert about ourselves. Perhaps we shall be numbered among the goats and not among the sheep! Perhaps we shall end up on the outside! These warning signals in the New Testament are meant to remind us daily of the possibility that at the end our Lord will say to *us*, "I never knew you; depart from me . . ." (*Matt. 7: 23*).



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Read *John*, *ch. 11*.

THE eleventh chapter of John, containing the account of the raising of Lazarus, is both the climax of Jesus' mighty signs and the beginning of those final events which culminated in the cross and the resurrection. A swift glance at the chapter shows that the miracle is described in the greatest detail, but is not illuminated (as some of the earlier ones were) by any discourse at the end. The interpretation of this sign is left to Jesus' adversaries, who, in *vs. 45-53*, show that they intend to accomplish his death as quickly as possible.

Because of the double meanings we have noted in John, we are tempted to ask whether this narrative is to be understood as a parable of eternal life. In other words, is Jesus here confronting the death of the body or the death of the soul? In the case of the healing of the blind man, we understand that Jesus has in view spiritual blindness as well as physical defect. Going back to the sign of the bread and wine, we know from Jesus' own words that he intended the food and drink that he provided to signify the way of life eternal. The healing of the man at the pool indicated Christ's prerogative of forgiving sins and bestowing newness of life. The wine made at Cana symbolized the new wine of the gospel.

What, then, shall we make of the act of bringing back a man from the dead? Here we stand at the graveside and do well to remember that the Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death. Not because of any *particular* sin that Lazarus committed, but because humanity is what it is, we know that the sinful state of man brings him at length to physical death. Death calls for more than resuscitation: it calls for redemption. Therefore, faced by the fact of death and all its implications, Jesus decides that the time has come for him to lay down his own life for the sake of the world's salvation.

The Choice of the Time

Let us note a number of sayings that show the true meaning and outcome of the Lazarus miracle. Jesus says that Lazarus' sickness is "not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (*v. 4*). As we have so often noted, in the Fourth Gospel the glorification of the Son of God is identical with his suffering. Lazarus provides the occasion for that glorification, not merely in the sense of being the object of Christ's most striking miracle, but in the sense that Jesus died as a consequence of it. This is clarified when the disciples

point out the danger of going into Judea. Jesus replies that he must carry out his destiny within the time allotted him by God. (*Vs. 7-10*.) Although indicating in these words that his time of death has not yet come, Jesus also remarks that there is a limit to the time of life remaining to him—which is reminiscent of what he had said earlier (*ch. 9: 4*) with his reference to the night that comes when no man can work. That the disciples sense the impending crisis is further affirmed by Thomas, who, able to conceive the death of Jesus but not the resurrection, expresses a tragic sense of life in his words, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (*v. 16*).

The raising of Lazarus, then, is to be taken as the prelude to Jesus' own Passion, death, and resurrection. Another element in Jesus' deliberateness about the situation must also be noted. When he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two days longer. (*Ch. 11: 6*.) Obviously the intent was to let Lazarus die, so that he might be raised from the dead. It would be a very frivolous interpretation that took this to mean that Jesus was planning to make his power appear more spectacular. The point is that Jesus planned to bring his own death into connection with the raising of the dead. That is to say, he will die that men may live! For the sake of no less an enemy than death will he provoke the final crisis. The words in *vs. 9* and *10*, already referred to, confirm the sense that Jesus has at last found the time for which he has been waiting. This is the appropriate moment to render up his life.

Something still further must be observed: the raising of Lazarus is not the same thing as the resurrection of Christ. Lazarus one day will have to die again, and what he gets out of this miracle is only a short reprieve. The miracle, therefore, ultimately solves nothing. Rather, it indicates that the work of Christ in his own Passion has to do with redemption from the power of death, which itself is the fruit of sin. The true resurrection, into which Jesus' believers may hope to be initiated, is the one permanent release from the bondage of the world. The raising of Lazarus was in one sense a work of healing; yet death requires more than healing—it requires a new creation. Therefore, the Lazarus miracle having been accomplished, Jesus must now press on to the final phase of his ministry.

Momentous as were the words, "Lazarus, come out," uttered on that occasion, such words would be vastly more meaningful the *next* time Lazarus heard them. Then they would summon him to the mansions Jesus could prepare only when he himself had ventured



THE NAZARENE

By Clara Fasano

into the regions of death and in his own person had utterly triumphed over death. The raising of the man Lazarus remains as a sign of what Christ intended to do rather than the perfection and completion of his ministry. The victory still lies ahead. If, therefore, this narrative seems like a riddle, it is because that is just what it is—a riddle that invites us to seek the solution farther on than in the eleventh chapter of John.

Love and Authority

Two other points in the first part of this chapter should also be noted. For one thing, there is a striking insistence upon Jesus' love for Lazarus (*vs. 3-4, 11*). John does not provide the slightest trace of information about the character or personality of Lazarus. This does not mean that Lazarus is a kind of abstract person; after all, Jesus loved a real person. It is not as though anybody else would do as well for an experiment in raising the dead. Nevertheless, we are not confronted here or anywhere else in the Fourth Gospel with mere "human interest" situations. Lazarus is representative of humanity. The reason for the favor shown to Lazarus is not to be sought in certain characteristics of the man that we can appraise for ourselves and admire. On the contrary, the favor manifests pure grace—the grace of what the Bible calls election. The stress is on Jesus' love, not on the loveableness of Lazarus. Thus, this sign is a parable of the unmerited favor by which we ourselves hope for rescue from sin and death.

The other point of interest to be noted is the misunderstanding that arose over Jesus' saying that "Lazarus has fallen asleep" (*v. 11*; and see *vs. 11-15*

generally). To "fall asleep" was a common expression for death, often so used in New Testament times. The disciples clutch at the figure of speech and try to take it literally, with the purpose of turning Jesus away from taking the situation seriously enough to risk his life.

But Jesus and the disciples speak two different languages in regard to death. To Jesus, what has all the finality of death in the world's view is but a sleep from which he is able to awaken men. On the other hand, what men would soften down and treat as something to be solved in a way less drastic than Jesus' death and resurrection, Jesus regards with the utmost seriousness. Thus he bids others also face the stern facts. Having said that Lazarus had fallen asleep, but into such a sleep from which Jesus can call him back to wakefulness, he also pronounces that "Lazarus is dead" (*v. 14*). Jesus now brings in the theme of belief once more. He is glad that he was not there to cure Lazarus, for his later action may cause the disciples to believe more fully in him. Nevertheless, something eventful must happen—"Let us go to him"—and the meaning of all this will not be clear until the whole gospel story is concluded. Whether, in *v. 16*, Thomas has in mind Jesus' death or Lazarus' death does not matter. The point is that Thomas can only see death, and the glory of resurrection lies ahead.

Jesus and Martha

We turn now to the encounter between Jesus and Martha, beginning at *v. 20*. Martha greets Jesus with the famous words, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Although this expresses confidence in Jesus' power, it also contains an obvious

note of reproach. The disaster is associated with Christ's absence. Martha gives voice to the sense of Godforsakenness that human beings usually feel in moments of calamity—not knowing that the calamity, like Lazarus' death, always lies within God's ordering, that God may be glorified. Following this melancholy utterance, Martha then throws the responsibility onto Jesus for setting the situation right: "And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus, however, will not be put to the test before he has tested Martha. He replies by speaking of the resurrection, which by this time was an orthodox article of belief among many Jews. Like a child who has learned the catechism by rote, Martha answers automatically that she believes her brother will rise at the last day (v. 24).

Now comes one of the crucial points of the story. Jesus proclaims himself as the resurrection and the life, in whom the dead are already alive; and concludes this utterance with a question, "Do you believe this?" (Vs. 25-26.) The question is not whether Jesus can do anything about the death of Lazarus, but whether Martha really believes in Jesus Christ. He asks her to believe him as the resurrection and the life *before* there has been any miracle whatsoever. He asks her to believe before there is any promise of a miracle. He asks whether she can be satisfied for her brother to be either dead or alive, just as long as there is a Jesus Christ! Are you willing, he inquires, just to have *me* and let resurrection take care of itself?

This is the crucial question Jesus must raise. He must know, not whether he can prove himself with a miracle, but whether he has already sufficiently won Martha's faith. He is not inquiring into her ideas about the resurrection at the last day. She has already satisfied the claims of orthodox doctrine on this point and is evidently quite unconsoled by what she believes, just as millions hold a vague belief in immortality from which they derive little or no comfort. Anyone can believe in a far-off dream of life beyond death. What is at issue, however, is the faith that at the present moment lays its fears and sorrows to rest *in what Christ is*. What is at issue is the faith that finds that already, even in this corruptible world, the believer is midstream in life eternal and needs but to follow the current to reach the desired haven. It is this kind of faith alone which can take death in its stride, knowing that the grace of Christ will not be any less real or less powerful beyond the borders of this existence than it is in the present world.

Martha is asked to confess this faith: faith, not in immortality as such, not even in resurrection as yet, but in the all-sufficient person of Jesus Christ. Later in the narrative it becomes clear that her confession of faith might be open to question. Graciously, however, Jesus presses her no farther. For the moment he is content to accept such faith as she has. Fortunately for us, as for Martha, there is patience in the

Lord's attitude toward our confessions of faith. He seems willing to accept the part for the whole—willing to take our words of belief at face value, until he has built us up a little farther.

Following his words with Martha, Jesus turns to Mary. Mary's words are like Martha's first regretful greeting. (V. 32.) This time, however, there is no further development of the theme. Jesus at once inquires as to where Lazarus has been buried. In vs. 33-38 there are several references to a display of emotion on Jesus' part. This has usually been interpreted, as it was by the audience then, as evidence of Jesus' affection for the deceased. More probably, however, Jesus "groaned in spirit" because of the unbelief with which he was faced. This unbelief is one of the burdens he must bear, and he does not make it the occasion for any reproof to the unbelievers.

Jesus at the Tomb

Now Jesus comes to the tomb and orders the stone taken away. (Vs. 38-39.) Martha, who had previously confessed her faith in the ability of Christ to do the mightiest of deeds, objects to his command. Her reference to the corruption of Lazarus' body does more than heighten the drama of the miracle. It points to the whole situation in which Christ does miracles, namely, the corruption of mankind. The humanity with which Christ deals is something that is unbearable, something to be shut away and forgotten. Not even his loved ones wish to see Lazarus now. Only Jesus Christ is willing to face the stark reality of the situation.

In answer to the protest, Jesus refers to the glory of God. Even yet he gives no intimation of what he intends to do. To the thought of God everyone's mind should be uplifted. In the face of the most distasteful kind of corruption, Jesus calls upon those around him to believe, not in the raising of the dead, but in *God*. Where there is nothing further to hope for in human life, it is required that men should lift up their hearts, because now is the time for thinking of God.

The prayer that Jesus utters proclaims that *he* is the one who has believed and who shall see the glory of God. (Vs. 41-42.) He does not shrink from saying that he has prayed aloud so that others might believe in his divine commission. Just when the miracle is to be performed, Jesus once more points to belief in *himself* as the purpose of all that he says and does. God will not refuse to hear his own Son, but men can and do refuse to hear him.

Jesus now addresses Lazarus himself: "Lazarus, come out." He speaks in a loud voice, perhaps expressing his authority, or perhaps speaking in a way appropriate for one who would waken the dead. At the sound of Jesus' voice, Lazarus comes out of the grave: if *the living* will not hear the word of Christ, *the dead* will. Lazarus is drawn forth by the summons, but he comes out bound in the grave clothes in which

he was laid away. He does not walk on his own initiative until he is loosed and let go. (V. 44.)

The Beginning of the Beginning

Although Martha confessed faith in Christ as the resurrection and the life, yet she and all the family could not be content until they saw their lost one restored. We ourselves shall never be truly happy, or at peace, this side of resurrection. That is the only solution to the problem of our life, our sinning, and our death. And that is why the raising of Lazarus is the beginning of a chain of events rather than the triumphant culmination of a ministry.

The only kind of action that will prove effective is what *follows* the raising of Lazarus: Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, the Second Coming, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the dead, life everlasting.

For fear that many more will believe in him, the

chief priests and the Pharisees took counsel together to plot the destruction of Christ. With the utmost irony it was assigned to Caiaphas, the high priest, to say, "You do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people" (v. 50). Caiaphas is the unwitting prophet of the effective, redemptive action of Christ, which sets straight all that has gone wrong by the fact that a man, like all other men, died a natural death. The kind of death that Caiaphas and his co-workers plotted for Jesus Christ was the death that would once and for all overcome the power of the grave. Through the hostility of his foes, Jesus was thereby enabled to do far more for all his believers than he did for Lazarus. The authorities took counsel how to put him to death; and that meant, not only Christ's own resurrection, but resurrection realized perpetually for all who believe in Christ, the author of eternal life.

13

THE CHILDLIKE HEART

Read *Mark 10: 13-16.*

A toy catalog is not needed to prove the assertion that "Christmas is for children." The children themselves are convinced of this statement, and so are their parents, and so are many of their pastors. The merchandisers, of course, discovered long ago that Christmas is for children and have been leaders in the movement committed to keeping it that way.

Although the celebration of Christmas has many local embellishments, developed by tradition, determined often by geography, the central meaning of Christmas in America is discovered on Christmas morning when "the children" open their presents. Most all the preparatory motions are tied in some way to this climactic scene.

American churches, having realized to their dismay what the American Christmas is all about, have in

recent years sponsored various campaigns designed to "put Christ back into Christmas." Numerous communities have sought effective ways to redramatize the "religious" elements of Christmas. And the merchandisers have gone along with this scheme, because, in the end, adding religious embellishments produces a more rousing climax—meaning more presents for the children under the tree (meaning, of course, more cash in the tills of the merchandisers). A few nauseated individuals here and there have simply refused to participate in Christmas at all, giving up religious embellishments, the climax, and everything else. But these folks have been looked upon with grave suspicion as being not only unchristian, unsocial, but also, perhaps, un-American. On the whole, however, people have reacted to misgivings they may have over Christmas not by refusing to participate but by participating all the more heartily and "merrily," justifying their activities on the basis that "it's all for the kids, anyway." Clearly, most American churchmen want to have their religious Christmas, with the Christmas story and Christmas carols and prayers, at the same time that they have the other Christmas, which reaches its impassioned conclusion on children's day, namely, December 25.

Which Christmas Do We Mean?

What do we really mean when we say that Christmas is for children? Do we mean that only children can get worked up over surprises? Can children alone have fun in preserving secrets, dropping misleading clues, wrapping gifts in misrepresentative packages,



THIS ARTICLE was written by John R. Fry.

and so on? Are children the only parts of the American population who can become excited? Candidly, we should have to answer these questions with a straightforward "No." Adults share fully—often as leaders—in the development of the Christmas excitement. Adults set the tone of expectancy within the society and the households of the society by letting it be known through general mood, winks, hints, mysterious comings and goings, that there is something to expect. This is the true excitement generator in so far as the children are concerned. Children become excited over the prospect of Christmas when they have good reason to expect that they are going to receive something. Wonder over all the nuances of the Christmas tradition, the delighted singing of carols, the erecting of the Christmas tree, is aroused over what the presents are going to be, not over whether there are going to be presents.

Parents may indeed drop ominous hints in the middle of November to the effect that Christmas is going to be very poorly celebrated because the finances are in bad shape. But such a resolution, formed within the good common sense of the adults, is banished by the warm December winds that blow from advertising pages, radio, television, and the churches, melting the resolution and springing parents into new moods of pre-Christmas excitement. The children become excited because, as they look at their parents for cues, they find that the parents are, after all, going to buy plenty of presents—an exciting prospect!

Do we mean, when we say that Christmas is for children, that only children can get into the meaning of Christmas? Are we saying that only children can have any understanding of the shepherds, the star, the baby Jesus, the Wise Men, and so on? We might begin to answer this question by noting that normally children are not very sentimental about babies. Many children look upon babies as enemies at the most, or usurpers at least. Children also have no more than normal interest in stars, Wise Men, shepherds, sheep, and cattle. They may without prompting be able to understand some of the more profound aspects of the Christmas stories (found in Matthew and Luke), but certainly they are ill-equipped by disposition, Scriptural understanding, or experience, to perceive the central meaning of these stories. That is reserved for adults, and adults, furthermore, who have some intelligent grasp of their own Old Testament heritage.

We should have to say, then, that of all portions of the population, children are least apt to understand the "real" meaning of Christmas. They cannot understand the dark shadows of the cross that both Matthew and Luke throw across the manger scene. Without the understanding that the Jewish community into which Jesus was born was an exiled community that had developed, in the four hundred odd years of its exile, increasingly grandiose dreams of a Messianic deliverer, children can have little appreciation of the incredibly ironic coming of God in this humble guise. They may

appreciate, of course, the lack of understanding of the innkeeper and may be able to identify with the shepherds who fairly flew to the stable upon hearing the angelic announcement, but they may easily be lost in sleep or their private reflections before they come to the central point of Luke's story, when Simeon recognizes in this Jewish baby the long-awaited Messiah. We might with equal accuracy say that few adults seem equipped to understand the central point of the Christmas story, and only the most precocious children could ever perceive what really is at stake in the stories themselves.

By so willingly laying Christmas exclusively at the feet of children, do we mean that only children can accept *the* gift? This is doubtful. Let us hasten to say that children are perfectly willing to receive Jesus as the Christmas gift as long as they receive other gifts too. Were they to have no other gifts, most American children would feel cheated at having received *the* gift alone. Usually Jesus is represented as a gift similar to other gifts the children are going to receive. And hence Jesus may be thought of, within the imaginations of our children, as a box-like guarantee of joy. He is like a piece of paper the children receive from kindly aunts and uncles to be used after Christmas to buy things for themselves. He may mean to the children a sense of happiness or joy or well-being; but we must remember that these feelings arise in the first place because the children suspect that they are going to be well-treated



at the real Christmas, namely, when the gifts are opened—the gifts that really matter.

Jesus in a box, as a wonderful, delightful, joy-inspiring something or other is simply not the Jesus known to the Christian faith. This Jesus was met by hostility, consistent resentment, and profoundly aggressive resistance throughout the whole of his life. Even his mother and his brothers turned against him, misunderstood him with the same unending misunderstanding with which he was met by his disciples. This New Testament picture of Jesus casts dark shadows across the portals of our supposed Christmas joy. And it should warn us that it is a mistake to make Jesus the best gift of all on our Christmas days. He does not fit in with these gifts at all; he is not that kind of gift. He came to save men precisely from this kind of stupidity and blindness and lustful greed, not to reinforce it.

Children have been led to understand that the annual Christmas celebration is for them. Were the

church to begin celebrating the incarnation in worship and life, the children's Christmas (presents under the tree) and the "religious" Christmas (carols and merriment) would both be shattered. Good old Saint Nicholas might not be jolly any more, nor would the children. And who could blame the children for being disappointed? They would have lost an annual super-birthday.

Which Children Do We Mean?

In the Gospels there is a story that, on first glance, lends some credence to the idea that Christmas is for children and that adults must adopt a childlike heart in order to appreciate Christmas. That well-known story, however, needs much closer and more thoughtful inspection than it ordinarily receives. It is told in *Mark 10: 13-16* (see also *Matt. 19: 13-15*; *Luke 18: 15-17*):

"And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.' And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them."

These verses occur in the midst of a chapter full of conflict and misunderstanding. The leaders of the Jews, the disciples, and the celebrated man who has been called the rich young ruler exhibit in their own fashion an unwillingness to believe what Jesus says. They have their own views on the nature of the Kingdom of God. They come to Jesus in order to catch him unawares or to bait him or to engage him in debate. This antagonism toward him leads Jesus to say to his disciples, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" and, later, "With men it is impossible [for a man to be saved], but not with God; for all things are possible with God" (*vs. 24, 27*).

The children who come to Jesus in the midst of his controversy are strikingly different from these other people. They come already believing, not to find belief or to prove their unbelief. That they are children is not the important point. Their *belief* is. The fact that Jesus shortly addresses his disciples as "children" indicates that the physical children were not being considered as physical children but as believers, i.e., sons and daughters of God. Hence, in definitive words, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it," we find Jesus admonishing us to believe and not restricting the Kingdom of God to children as such. Faith rather than age or disposition is at stake in the matter of receiving the Kingdom of God.

Christians who are told to become like children (especially at Christmas) should also be told what this

means, namely, that they should be faithful. That would take Christmas out of the realm of a children's day, a super-birthday party, and place it in the realm of faith where it properly belongs.

Christmas does concern the childlike heart (= faithful heart); faith versus idolatry, celebration of the incarnation versus celebration of children's day, do arise. Therefore, Christmas conceivably could become the time at which this issue is faced. Probably at no other point has the American church more completely identified itself with society or allowed its message to become subtly changed. The kind of Christmas that the *church* stands for today can be celebrated by everyone in America. Even Jews, in some instances, find that they don't have to throw away any scruples in order to participate in Christmas. Christmas is for the children and has nothing to do with whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. In such a situation some Christians might begin to think that precisely their faith drives them away from anything that resembles Christmas celebration. Faith in Jesus Christ could mean refusing to buy the presents, sing the carols, set up the tree, light the candles, drink the eggnog, send the cards, eat the meal—refusing *in his name* to identify his name with senseless and frivolous orgy.

Let the people who need to dream of a white Christmas. Let the people who must continue to think whatever they must about the festival. But remember, also, the numberless thousands, known only to psychiatrists and pastors, who spend the latter days of December in profound melancholy and often acute despair. These sense the tragic hollowness of all the noise. They especially are shattered by the painful guilt of a world that needs to hear about God's coming to us in Jesus Christ and not about a god who has been compounded from equal parts of Santa Claus and tinsel.

Perhaps no demonstration of faith would be so dramatic as refusing to have Christmas. Few demonstrations would be as misunderstood. Yet the reasons for the misunderstanding make more insistent the crisis of faith for the believer. And the children might learn that all is not lost because loving parents would want to increase the toy ration all year long.

Next Quarter

The series of fifteen articles, "How to Understand the Fourth Gospel," will be concluded in the Jan.-March, 1961, *CROSSROADS*. On January 22, a new series of articles will begin that will explore the teachings of Jesus—and examine basic ideas concerning the Christian faith in these teachings. *Jesus and God's New People: The Four Gospels*, by Howard Clark Kee (Westminster Guides to the Bible series, The Westminster Press; \$1.50), is a suggested resource book for that study.

The Christian

Round Table

UNIT I

The Long, Hard Pull

Our age in America churns with massive forces, driven by a billion kilowatts and the power of ten billion horses, alive with sixty-five million electronic people telling awesome mechanical giants what to make next, filling a thousand city dumps with yesterday's paper, eating a whole generation of pigs every morning for breakfast, tearing down complete mountain ranges in Minnesota on Friday to build up the weekend junk yards in Boston, New York, and all points west, always asking again and again, "What'll we make next, what'll we sell now, where do we buy it, when's our next pay day, and what's on television tonight?"

Once with a candle America sat on a one-horse jig, and the forest was all around. It has been a long, hard pull since then for everybody, with a lot of fights and arguments, and nobody agrees yet and maybe never will. And the way one person tells about it all is sure to make others disagree, with millions of tongues and twice that many eyes, all cross and at cross purposes. Jesse Christman, of the Presbyterian Industrial Project in Detroit, tells part of the story his own way in the first two articles of this unit and the third article of Unit II. The other articles of these two units are adapted from the February, 1959, issue of *Social Progress*, published by the Department of Social Education and Action of our Board of Christian Education, and are used by permission.

1: BUY NOW—PAY LATER

THE head of American Motors, George Romney, may be remembered in history not so much for leading the fight to establish the compact car as for being one of the first to voice publicly a crucial truth about the American economy. A year or two ago he reportedly said that we no longer live in a capitalistic society. The key word, he said, was not capitalism but "consumptionism."

Mr. Romney was pointing out that our problem today is in consuming, not in producing. When a nation moves from an agricultural to an industrial economy, its chief problem is investment capital, that is, money. India today is seeking to build a strong industrial foundation for its economic life. To do this it needs a strong steel industry. To have a strong steel industry it needs money—money to build giant mills and furnaces, money for hydroelectric dams to produce needed power, money for machines to take iron

ore from the ground. For India, investment money (capital), and the equipment that investment money will buy, is the key item.

But America faces a different problem. We have no shortage of investment money, that is, extra cash that our people will put into corporate stock. In fact, we have such an abundance of available capital or investment money that *our* steel industry, for example, can now produce more steel than we need. Last year the steel companies were able to sit on their hands for months while the mills were shut down and the workers on the picket lines. The companies did not need the steel they could have been making. They could not sell it, so why bother coming to terms with the union and returning to the production of something nobody needed? In 1960 the facts of life in this country are that if the steel industry went into full production it would turn out more steel than the na-

tion could use. We have a consumption problem: how to use all we can make, how to sell as many cars as the automobile companies can assemble, so that the automobile companies will use all the steel the steel companies can produce.

It Pays to Advertise

As a result of a consumption economy, the manufacturer—the captain of industry—is no longer the key man in our society. The key man today is the advertising man. He is the one who makes or breaks the system. He is the one who makes the wheels go around in Detroit and Chicago, Philadelphia and Kansas City. The automobile industry is a perfect example of an industry that lives by its advertising. When public opinion is successfully persuaded that the new models are the best ever, the industry shows a healthy profit, and its workers increase their income by overtime work. But on the other hand, when the adman is unable to convince you and me to buy the new Gas-Gulper-8, then the industry runs into red ink, its workers are laid off, and tragedy sets in. In 1958 the admen failed; the public refused to use their money (or better yet, their credit) to buy the shiny, chrome-loaded products. The industry took sick, workers by the tens of thousands went out into the street, and the economy of the nation went into a tail spin. When advertising fails to sell, recession sets in.

An instructive sidelight in all this, which simply goes to prove the point, is the influence of the advertising industry in the choice of the original product and in its styling. No longer does the manufacturer get out the product and *then* hire the agency to advertise and create demand for the product. From soap to cars, the admen have their say before the product is beyond the planning stage. For instance, advertising men convinced Chrysler that the Imperial model should be separated from the rest of the Chrysler line and presented to the public as an entirely different car. Or again, the June, 1959, issue of *Fortune* reported that it took twenty-five people to conduct the search for a suitable name and container design for Lever Brothers' liquid detergent, *Wisk*. For ten weeks they worked under top-secret, high-pressure conditions to come up with the can and the name we now find on the shelf at the supermarket.

This momentous enterprise consumed the time and energy of experts from the nation's largest advertising agency (Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn), from a noted design agency, and from Lever Brothers' upper-echelon executives.

It is easy to laugh at this sort of glorified busy work. In fact, it is difficult not to laugh at twenty-five grownups spending ten frantic weeks searching for a name and a color design for a small tin can, or at the tremendous expenditure of time and money that goes into the tail fins on next year's Cadillac, so that they will be noticeably different from the year before and yet still carry the family resemblance.

It is another matter, however, when you realize that the economic health of our society depends on just such monkey business as this. What would happen if suddenly the American public decided that a new car wasn't important every year or two? A decision like that on the part of any considerable group of consumers would leave tens of thousands of automobile workers out on the street, to say nothing of workers in rubber, steel, glass, and other related industries who depend for their jobs on the orders of the automobile manufacturers. Clearly, this sort of decision would bring quick disaster to our consumption-gear economy; for when a major industry like automobiles hits the skids, others come sliding after. Like it or not, we are tied to a consumption economy that requires us to consume more and more products for which we have little pressing need. The "more and more" should be emphasized; for with a growing population and an expanding work force, we have to go ahead in our economy just to stay where we are. In order to maintain the same standard of living for more people, the economy must expand.

The consumption problem is in no way limited to what economists call the "hard-goods" industry. Agriculture is also involved in consumption problems. Farmers are caught in nothing less than fantastic overproduction. For example, almost *half* our 1959 wheat production was surplus. It was not needed to supply the needs of our people or to sell out of the country. A highly technical industrial society has provided the farmer with mechanical equipment, chemical fertilizers, hybrid seeds, and many other helps that make him and his land enormously productive. The result: in 1960 the average farmer will have produced food enough to supply the needs of approximately twenty-one people. In 1940 the same farmer produced only enough for eleven people. Today the Government has almost nine billion dollars invested in surplus foods—foods that, for the most part, simply sit and spoil because we produce more than we can consume. In 1958 we spent 119 million dollars simply to store our surplus. It seems that no matter how hard the Department of Agriculture tries to slow down farm production, the surplus just keeps rolling in.

You Can't Even Give It Away

How do Christians "love their neighbor" in an economy like this? In what way can a person in his home town love the men who made his car? Is it a Christian's duty, out of concern for the livelihood of Cadillac workers, to rush out and buy a new Cadillac El Dorado convertible? And how about that second car? Is it morally right for a Christian to put off any longer buying the new (or used) Thunderbird he's been coveting? Doesn't he have a responsibility to support an increasing national consumption with his savings and earnings? Does anybody have the right to keep on saving when the nation's economic health needs his spending power? In all probability, your own job, if

you have one, depends on the willingness of many people to buy something they don't really need. And the reverse is also true: their jobs probably depend on your purchases.

Can we increase our consumption without losing our souls? Can we gorge ourselves sufficiently with gadgets and "things" so that the economy can absorb the new workers who come into the work force every year and offer them, as well as ourselves, a decent job opportunity? Can we accomplish this when we know all the time that millions of our fellow human beings in other countries are hungry, sick, and miserable? To enjoy our luxury, must we bottle up our consciences and harden our hearts against the needs of others? Or can we live the most abundant life in history while we know in our hearts and minds the needs of the rest of God's children? Will our abundant "consumption" allow us to worship God in any honest faith?

A "consumption economy" is loaded with problems

for Christians. Our faith does not exist in a vacuum but lives squarely in the middle of the world's life. The world's problems are the Christian's problems, if he is to be true to God the Creator and to Jesus Christ who gave his life on behalf of the world.

Suppose we decide, as Christians, to do something about all this: What will we do? For a single instance, will we give away our surplus food and autos? If we do, we may ruin the economies of other nations that live by selling what we are giving away. But suppose we *could* give away our surplus. Who then would pay for its production? Are we willing to be taxed to pay for supplying the needs of a hungry world?

The moral problems of abundance in a "consumption economy" are as staggering as the moral problems of poverty in an impoverished economy. But these are problems we should face now, in the light of what we believe about man and God and life in the world Jesus Christ died for.

2: PEOPLE AREN'T ALL THE SAME

THROUGH most of last year and this, people have been reading what Vance Packard wrote about seeking status first. Before his book, *The Status Seekers*, had even landed in the bookstores, many predicted that it would be one of the big best sellers. They were right, of course. It was no gamble to predict the popularity of this book, any more than it was a gamble to predict the success of Kinsey's books on sexual behavior. When someone writes a book purporting to be a factual account of the habits and attitudes of all the people, it is automatically well on its way to the best-seller list. When, in addition, the writer picks habits and attitudes that are close and dear to the hearts and minds of all, the book is almost bound to be successful. Packard hit the jackpot. He wrote about our ideas of class and social standing. He went on about who is "upper" and who is "not so upper," about success and limited success, about where you are compared to where I am on the social ladder.

Everybody to the Middle!

When a person writes or speaks about class and status in America, he is aiming squarely at the center of much of the conscious and unconscious concern in the minds of American people. Practically everyone is interested in the question, "How am I doing?"—particularly, "How am I doing *compared to how you are doing?*"

If someone were to ask, "What class are you?" how would you answer? Probably you would say, "Middle class." In the May, 1959, issue of *Fortune*, it is stated that "nobody is more reluctant to say 'upper class' than a qualified member." And it might take a person with a poor estimate of himself to say that he

was "lower class." Clearly, most people want to think of themselves as middle class—maybe a little upper-middle. But from the point of view of anyone trying to classify society, everyone *cannot* be middle class. The word "middle" implies something on either side.

Many observers of the social scene in America tell us that we are rapidly becoming a one-class society. For example, about a year ago a Labor Department study stated, "The separate identity of the 'working class' in this country is rapidly fading away." For the Labor Department, at least, the way of life of wage earners and salaried appeared to be virtually the same. Another authority has suggested that workers are increasingly middle class, based on the report that more and more workers are in the middle-income group according to earnings.

All this push for a one-class society fits right in with the old American dream, according to which everyone is pretty much the same, each counts as much as the next, each has the same aspirations and goals as everybody else. The existence of a working class has been the only stumbling block to this idea, and now we are even doing away with this class. Even the existence of a group of extremely wealthy families is taken care of by the assertion that they share the same values and standards with the rest of the country even though they are somewhat better heeled. But this notion of a single class may be one of those ideas which we accept more because we want to believe it than because it is obvious or true.

Differences

We fool ourselves when we say that persons can be "classified" according to income. Recently a city pastor was heard to say: "All this talk about 'working



Laborers only have a chance to bargain with giant corporations about wages and working conditions if they do it together.

class' is bunk! Why, some of the members of this church who work in offices are worse off financially than factory workers." He assumed that class is determined by income; and since some of his white-collar people were earning less than laborers, the working class was therefore an illusion and nonsense.

But money is not the sole factor to be considered. At least two other yardsticks can be used to distinguish between middle and working class. First, there is the matter of the *kind* of job a person has. Secondly, attention should be paid to a person's *inner feelings*. That is, who does he think he is? Is he conscious of being in a certain class?

Most production workers, who have only their labor to sell, will speak of a good job as "one where you can keep clean." For them, a job has more or less status according to how dirty one gets in doing it. Thus, if you wear a white shirt, it is a symbol of a better type of job and higher status. This quickly draws a line between white shirt and dirty shirt and forms the beginning of class distinctions.

In other words, a man's position relative to the productive process forms one of the major standards for class. If he *controls* production in some sense (for example, an engineer, a foreman, a planner, a designer, a sales-promotion person), he is different from the man who *is controlled* by production (for example, the laborer who is sent home when an assembly line breaks down). The man who is in some sense "his own boss" comes to be in a different class from one who does everything exactly as he is told without freedom of decision over any significant part of it. Thus, the kind of job a man does is important in "classifying" him.

But the condition of a man's shirt is not the only factor determining class location. A lot depends on

how a person thinks about himself. For instance, what class do you put yourself in? Do you speak about "*us* working people" or "*those* working people"? A person's own inner attitude about himself is more important than his income for locating his class. Many men and women consider themselves working people and identify their interests with those of the working class even though they themselves are in the \$8,000-\$11,000 a year group. Others, who earn meager incomes, such as department-store clerks, may be equally conscious of belonging to the middle class and would, for example, recoil from the idea of organizing a union in their store.

Customs and Integrity

There appears to be a recognizable and real working class, distinct from the growing middle class. This working class has character and integrity which is different from middle-class integrity. We sometimes assume that our own standards and ideals should apply to everybody, and that the sooner the rest of the world begins to behave as we do the better everything will be. This exclusiveness is a peculiarly middle-class failing.

The last time I walked a picket line, there was an act of violence that made headlines and received much middle-class disapproval. A car was driven from the picketed plant and attempted to cross the picket line. It was driven in such manner and at such a speed that it threatened the picketers with injury. As a result, by the time the car passed through the line and reached the street it was surrounded by pickets, forced to stop, had its fenders dented, its windows smashed, and was almost overturned.

Now, the middle class has a distaste for violence in any form, and it promptly put this incident down as mob violence by union hoodlums. However, when a group of men picketing a plant find their lives threatened by a car driven from that plant at excessive speed, a reaction of indignation leading to violence is neither hard to understand nor easy to condemn. Violence, though clearly outside of middle-class behavior patterns, is not necessarily an indication of lack of integrity and responsibility. A man on a picket line cares not only for his own working conditions but for those of all his fellow workers. He is exercising responsibility for the whole group.

For people of the middle class, individual responsibility is the password, with the emphasis on *individual*. According to this conviction, the ideal man takes care of himself and expects others to do likewise. The best possible world emerges when each person looks after himself.

For people of the working class, responsibility is exercised *corporately*. Workers long ago learned that when each man looks out for himself the weak suffer. A laborer, with only muscle to sell, has no chance to bargain with a giant corporation about wages and working conditions. Laborers must do it together. On

the other hand, an executive with skills to sell can bargain or shop around and take care of himself. Thus, integrity in one class is irresponsibility in another.

Shirt-Front Religion

How does the church fit into this class structure? Two facts stand out. First, the middle-of-the-road Protestant churches—the standard brands—are at their best with the middle class and at a disadvantage with the working class. For example, check the churches in the metropolitan area nearest you. If this area is at all typical, the largest, probably wealthiest, and most active churches will be in the suburbs, where the middle-class people live. If there are large downtown churches, they will usually be filled and supported by these same middle-class suburb dwellers. What about the older parts of the city? There the standard-brand churches are in trouble. Their large sanctuaries are occupied by a scattered few people, the buildings are run down, the neighborhood is decaying, and most of the congregations of United Presbyterian churches have moved or are moving out to the suburbs in pursuit of “our kind of people.” There, in the heart of the city where the working class lives, the flourishing churches are the pentecostal sects, as the United Pentecostal Church, Inc., The Church of God, independent Baptist groups, and others.

The other fact about the church and the class structure is that the main-stream Protestant churches have embraced and adopted the middle-class outlook on life. This in itself may explain why we are in such trouble in areas where the working class is dominant. Sometimes it seems as though the church and the

middle class have combined together to push a universal standard of behavior. When this happens, what the middle class thinks of as poor manners tends to become “unchristian.” Certain kinds of behavior, although not morally wrong, come to be looked down on both by members of the church and by members of the middle class. It even gets to the point of the kind of clothes one wears to church. A man recently was heard apologizing to the minister at the door after worship because he was wearing only a shirt and trousers without tie or coat. He seemed to feel as if there was something wrong in coming to worship this way.

Swearing is another example of the union of the church and the middle class. Most people who let a word of mild profanity slip out when on church property will quickly look around and come up with a sheepish apology. The bad manners displayed in language have come to be associated with unchristian or unchurchly behavior. Thus, if some of us go to a labor-union meeting and hear one of the members call another down with violent and profane language, we immediately feel this is not the place for a Christian.

Elsewhere

When a particular standard of behavior is assumed to be universally valid, the words “respectable” and “Christian” come to mean the same thing. A good Christian life is a respectable one, and vice versa. “Respectable,” used in this way, doesn’t mean “decent” or “human” but something more like “customary” or “the way *we* live.” The end result is that only “the respectable” associate themselves with the church, whereas those whose integrity is found beyond the limits of this respectability go elsewhere.

3: THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING

IT is often difficult for us to understand people who are not like ourselves. We feel uneasy among those who have different family customs, regional dialects, ways of thinking and playing, working and relaxing, and different expressions of what is good, worthy, true, and needful. Differences of various kinds between us and others (those peculiar strangers) nearly always push us off-balance and out of the comfortable, well-fitting rut that we had supposed we and everybody else were in together.

It cannot be denied that human beings have an “our side *versus* their side” failing. Friends delight us; strangers only intrude. The goals we seek are just and worth-while and obviously what we have a right to seek and fight for. The goals “those others” seek—even if the goals are basically the same as our own—may be legitimate, but those people have no right to fight *us* to attain them! Why can’t they do things the way *we* do? Why don’t they dream exactly *our* dreams and join *our* side to attain them?

We are proud of the dreams that brought our country into existence. Our nation was born in a revolution against political tyranny and economic exploitation and has developed the world’s most stable democratic institutions. It is curious, then, even if not surprising, that such a nation should have been so hostile to the development of the trade-union movement.

Not only have unions in the course of their struggle for recognition had to join battle with individual employers and their hired squads of Pinkerton agents and strikebreakers, but they have waged a continuing battle against adverse opinion in the public mind. The college-educated, white-collar, churchgoing segment of the American middle class has traditionally held that if a man is given the right to manage his business as he pleases, everyone will be happy, healthy, and well fed.

It is only since the mid-thirties that respectable public opinion in the United States has accepted the fact that unions are here to stay and that they have

a legitimate right to organize, to bargain, and to strike. This public acceptance has come about slowly, led by the policy of the Federal Government and the cautious social concern of church leadership.

Still More to Learn

The process of education is by no means completed. Generally speaking, the man or woman in the pew of the typical, orthodox middle-class Protestant church looks with suspicion upon the labor movement, its political philosophy, and its social and economic aspirations. The opinion of one coal operator during the anthracite strike of 1902 has been and may still be the underlying tenor of church opinion: "The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for, not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country."

The increased complexity of union organization, as well as the impersonal massiveness of modern industrial society and the separation of its way of life from that of the professional office, the home, and the church, have all helped to alienate the trade-union movement from the middle-class public mind. The public tends to fear what it does not understand. Add to this the damage done to the public relations of organized labor by the Becks and Hoffas. The result is a mounting fear that the labor movement stands for narrow special interests, is controlled by and for cynical, vulgar men, is clannish, unrestricted, and powerfully influential in public affairs to the inevitable detriment of the individualistic, uncontroversial, and respectable American way of life.

The Early Years

In a similar climate of opinion the American labor movement was born. In 1806 eight shoemakers in Philadelphia, who had organized and struck for higher wages, were tried by the courts and convicted of "criminal conspiracy."

This was the first of some sixteen cases in which the doctrine of criminal conspiracy was pronounced against the attempt of workers to combine their efforts to seek wage raises. During this period it continued to be legal for an individual worker to risk his job by asking for a raise. But if he joined with others in the same shop and refused to work, he was guilty of conspiracy and subject to imprisonment.

In 1842, however, union activity was declared to be lawful in the Commonwealth vs. Hunt case in Massachusetts. The Boston shoemakers had been accused of criminal conspiracy when they refused to work with people who were not members of their society. Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw decided, however, that if a closed shop was the manner by which some workers required others to conform to standards of work, union organization for that purpose was not unlawful.

However, legal opposition to union organization and

strikes continued under the doctrines of civil conspiracy and illegal purposes throughout most of the nineteenth century. It was now the aggrieved employer, whose property interests were threatened by union demands, who initiated legal action against the union; and he was powerfully aided by the imposition of the labor injunction which restrained both organization and picketing.

These legal obstructions to trade unionism in the early days were based on the assumption that the objectives and purposes of unions were basically opposed to the interest of individuals and to the community at large. The average or standard wage in a particular craft or occupation was considered normative for all workers in that category, and they were obliged to work at this prescribed rate. If they did not agree that the rate was fair, they should not have taken the job in the first place—or they could, as individuals, quit and seek other employment. The American public, with its untrammelled individualism, its civil government and its judiciary, looked with alarm and disfavor upon the attempt of some of its citizens to band themselves in separate organizations demanding economic privileges that had not been voluntarily conferred upon them as "deserving individuals."

The Need for Solidarity and Strength

Despite the opposition of the law and of public opinion generally, workers found it necessary to organize against the low wages and long hours of work in the rapidly expanding industrial society that was developing in the mid-nineteenth century. With the great European immigration that began in the 1840's a tremendous supply of cheap labor was available to the industrial Northeast. The factory system and the regional market, replacing the earlier system of home craftsmanship and local markets, created a rapid growth in industrial economy. Along with this there arose the problems of unsafe and unhealthy conditions of work, slum housing, child labor, poverty, and imprisonment for debt.

Although printers in Philadelphia struck for a minimum wage of \$6 a week as early as 1786, it was not until 1827 that a labor movement was formed that included workers in different trades united into one central labor organization. The Mechanics Union of Trade Associations of Philadelphia consisted of various local unions and marked the beginning of a sense of the need for solidarity and strength among workers to prevent economic and political exploitation.

Following 1827, labor unions began to spring up in many trades and industries. Trade-union federations became politically active in New York, Boston, and other cities of the North.

Distrust

There is no question but that the symbolism, secrecy, and ethnic character of the early movements helped to make unionism suspect. The public believed

that union ideals were dominated by "foreign elements" and that their way of operating was out of step with American democratic process.

The mixture of quasi-religious, socialistic, and fraternal elements in the early trade-union organizations shows the deep emotional and idealistic roots out of which sprang the sophisticated industrial unions of

later years. But it was just this ideological and romantic quality of the trade-union movement which made many God-fearing, respectable citizens fear its potential influence in a free-enterprise, capitalistic economy. These early fears have hardened into the distrust of organized labor that still characterizes a large segment of white-collar and professional people today.

4: ROMANCE OR REALITY

THE idealistic and emotional quality of the early labor movement was typified by the Knights of Labor, founded in 1869. The Knights, organized originally by a group of Philadelphia tailors, became labor's most powerful weapon against the great railroad magnates of the 1880's. Until that period it operated as a secret organization for workers in a variety of trades, meeting in the homes of workers and encouraging co-operatives, political action, and boycotts against employers whose policies they considered unfair.

After 1880 the Knights of Labor ended its underground activity, which had been severely criticized as dangerous and subversive. By 1886 it had openly organized more than 700,000 workers. After 1886 it began to decline rapidly because of poor organization and leadership and the bad public relations that resulted from the disastrous Haymarket Riot in Chicago. On that occasion a bomb was thrown into the midst of a group of policemen, resulting in the death of seven men and injury to several others. The court action taken against the workers condemned seven leaders to death and one to life imprisonment. Four were finally hanged, and three received jail sentences.

Against the massive opposition of industry, the courts, and public opinion, the unions developed a psychological mixture of inferiority and aggressiveness—a sense of being separate, embattled, and called to suffer social ostracism, the loss of civil rights, of economic security, and even of life itself.

A New Concept

During the rapid collapse of the Knights of Labor during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a new concept of labor organization emerged from the craftworkers. These skilled workers were in a particularly favorable bargaining position compared with unskilled workers. Under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, one of the great pioneers of the labor movement in this country, the cigar makers, carpenters, printers, and iron workers brought their autonomous unions into a new federation of national organizations called the American Federation of Labor.

Gompers believed that the Knights of Labor was "purely sentimental and bereft of all practical thought and action." What was needed was a nationwide labor movement that was less concerned with camaraderie in the working class and more concerned about con-

crete issues of wages and better working conditions through realistic collective bargaining. To pursue these objectives Gompers became the first president of the AFL (then the Federation of Organized Trades, and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada) in 1881 and served in that capacity, except for one year, until his death in 1924.

The AFL was much better suited to the new realities of the American industrial scene. In contrast to the local unions and the city central bodies, the national unions and the AFL, under the leadership of men like Gompers and Adolph Strasser, were able to give the labor movement stability and continuity in both the United States and Canada. The period of utopianism and general reform was over, and the labor movement settled down to do business with employers on the immediate, practical concerns of the workingman: wages, hours, conditions of work, and security against unemployment, sickness, and old age.

Challenge or Be Destroyed

Another early pioneer of international trade unionism was Eugene V. Debs, who led the American Railway Union in the spectacular strike against the Pullman Company in 1894. Debs, a man of passionate social concern, recognized the strategic importance of the railroads. As a leader of the Socialist Party, he was convinced that nothing less than a display of labor's power at the heart of the national industrial economy could free the working class from the oppression of "robber barons of industry."

Debs's American Railway Union called a sympathy strike in behalf of the employees of the Pullman Parlor Car Company, who struck against a drastic wage reduction in May, 1894. The strike paralyzed the Midwest, and Federal troops were sent to Chicago to enforce a court injunction ordering the union leaders to "cease and desist." Debs and other officials were sent to prison for refusing to comply with the court order, and a national controversy was precipitated with many leaders urging Gompers and the AFL to start a general strike. However, the AFL refused to throw the strength of some 270,000 craftsmen behind the efforts of the railroad workers. Many people began to suspect that the Federation was not courageous enough to merit leadership for the organization of the masses of industrial workers.

Certainly Samuel Gompers lacked the broad vision wedded to political astuteness that characterized Eugene V. Debs. The years following the Civil War had brought a severe depression and unemployment. General harassment of the unions by black lists, Pinkerton police, and strike injunctions made the course clear. As Debs believed, either the unions would have to take political action and challenge the hostility of the Federal Government or be systematically destroyed.

One of the principal weapons against the unions during this period was the Sherman Antitrust Act. Originally conceived in 1890 as a measure to discourage the monopolistic practices of large-scale corporations, it was later used against the unions. The hatters union of Danbury, Connecticut, was fined \$210,000 under the Sherman Act for organizing a nationwide boycott in sympathy with their cause. In 1922 the Act was interpreted as ruling out the right of a union to strike when, as in the case of the United Mine Workers vs. the Coronado Coal Company in Arkansas, such action was an intentional conspiracy to restrain the movement of interstate commerce.

It was the clear testimony of the Haymarket Riot of 1886, the Homestead Strike of 1892 when National Guardsmen melted the lines of the steel workers, and the Pullman Strike two years later that in those early years when the law arrived at the scene of labor trouble it was first applied *against* the unions.

Struggle for Survival

The period from the Civil War to the First World War was one of a desperate struggle of unions for room in which to live. Although the worker's eco-

nomie condition improved with declining prices and a reduction in the average workday from 11 hours in 1865 to 10 hours in 1900, the general climate of the country was against the labor union. The employers for the most part were in rigid opposition to unionization and used the black list and the "yellow dog" contract to prevent it. And well into the 1920's a formidable body of law, both common and statutory, held a restrictive vigil over unions which sought to express their grievances by action.

During World War I both voluntary and imposed emergency restrictions were set up against organizing and strikes. Many employers refused to recognize unions that had been organized in their plants; and the hard-won gains of the past rapidly deteriorated. After the war, from 1920 to 1923 union membership declined from about five million to three and one-half million, and during the prosperous years before the crash of 1929 there was little or no growth. The tragic depression that followed further decimated the ranks of labor. Of the 105 AFL international and national unions in 1929, only 44 were able to maintain or enlarge their membership after 1925. By 1932 there were less than three and a quarter million members in all American labor unions. The AFL, hardly able to hold its own, was unable to organize the rapidly growing mass-production industries.

Taking advantage of the divisive and weak posture of organized labor during the postwar period, many corporations organized "company unions," which had no outside affiliation and were usually sponsored and controlled by the employer. These paternalistic unions numbered about two million workers and posed a continuing threat to a free trade-union movement.

5: NEW RESPECT AND STATURE

The Right to Bargain

IN 1932 the Roosevelt era began a tremendous revival of hope in the ranks of labor. The Federal Government commenced a major shift in its generally antiunion policy. In 1932 the passage of the Norris-La Guardia Act limited the use of the damaging court injunction. In 1933 the National Industrial Recovery Act included the famous section 7 (a) which guaranteed the right to organize and to bargain collectively. In 1935 Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act), which Samuel Gompers, for all his distrust of Government intervention, would have recognized as labor's real "Magna Charta."

The Wagner Act established the equality of bargaining power between employers and employees by forbidding the employer (1) to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in their right to collective bargaining; (2) to refuse to bargain collectively; and (3) to dominate or interfere with a labor organization or

organize a company union. A National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was established to enforce the act, and during its first five years it handled more than 20,000 complaints with only twenty cases of litigation reaching the level of the Supreme Court. Out of that number, eighteen were upheld by the Court.

The moral and administrative support given by the New Deal to the labor movement encouraged the unions to redouble their organizing activity. But what was equally important to the future of American labor, this support began slowly to make unions more acceptable to the public. The Senate Committee on Civil Liberties, headed by Robert M. LaFollette, produced over seventy volumes of hearings that exposed to the public view the subversion and terrorism used by the corporations to destroy organized labor. In these days of renewed efforts to restrict legitimate union activity it is unfortunate that that record is so largely forgotten by most people and so completely unknown to the

present generation of younger men and women moving into American business and industry.

Crafts or Industries

In the same year the Wagner Act was passed, the old desire of some of the AFL members to organize industrial unions broke out in an open struggle within the Federation. On November 10, 1935, eight leading unions formed a Committee for Industrial Organization to extend unionism to mass-production workers across various kinds of skills and trades in any one industry. The jurisdictional claims of the craft unions were thereby threatened, and the CIO (later Congress of Industrial Organizations) was suspended from the AFL in 1936.

Thus was inaugurated a period of bitter struggle to decide whether mass-production workers would be organized along craft union or industrial union lines. Rioting and bitterness between the two groups continued through the Second World War and have not ceased to be a factor in the present uneasy alliance of the AFL-CIO.

The CIO made tremendous gains in its organization of such industries as steel, automobile, rubber, textile, and aluminum. At its first constitutional convention in 1938 it was reorganized as a loose federation of nine national unions and thirty-two "organizing committees," which were the core groups for reaching the mass-production industries. John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, was elected as its first president.

Partners in the Nation's Economy

The labor movement made its "great leap ahead" with the development of unions in the basic industries of the United States, and by 1941 union membership totaled between ten and eleven million workers—more than double the membership in 1938.

However, it was the period of 1941 to 1945 that established the labor unions as the respected and powerful allies of management and government in the great effort to increase production, hold down strikes, and help organize the economy for winning the war with Germany and Japan. After Pearl Harbor the National War Labor Board was established as a watchdog program to prevent industrial disputes from undercutting the war effort. Labor was represented on all the regional boards.

The great production needs, the governmental activity of labor leaders, the development of "fringe benefits" (holiday, vacation pay, welfare, and pension plans, etc.) during the wage-stabilization program, the increase of women workers, and the new employment opportunities open to Negroes under President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 all helped to increase union membership and to give labor a firm footing for the struggle to come in the postwar readjustment. From 1940 to 1945 the labor force increased from 54 million to 64 million workers, providing a tremendous

pool for union membership under the union security provisions established by the Wagner Act of 1935. Although few national unions were created during the war years, collective bargaining agreements were widely extended throughout the nation. Union leaders like William Green, of the AFL, and Philip Murray and Sidney Hillman, of the CIO, were symbolic of labor's new status as a partner in national economic policy-making.

Strife Again

V-J Day in August, 1945, brought to an abrupt end the honeymoon with management, which, with the help of the Federal Government, had been sustained during the war years. The U. S. Department of Labor reports that there were forty-two major strikes, each involving 10,000 or more workers, in the ten months between the end of the war with Japan in August, 1945, and the end of war-emergency price-control regulations. The expiration of the OPA in June, 1946, permitted management more freedom to grant wage increases that the unions had demanded.

The revival of "free" collective bargaining did not bring peaceful industrial relations. As labor had warned, the end of price controls caused a surge in the cost of living and resulted in a demand for wage increases. The year 1946 was the most turbulent year in the history of the American labor movement, with a record number of 4,700 strikes involving 4,750,000 workers. Despite the resistance of employers, workers



in the mass-production industries gained during this year "package" increases estimated to be worth about 15 cents an hour, including the value of fringe benefits.

The inflationary spiral was in process. With prices mounting to offset the yearly wage increases, the unions took most of the public blame for the work stoppages and the rising cost of living, despite their claim that corporation profits were still more than adequate. By December, 1947, it cost the urban worker about 30 per cent more to live than on V-J Day. The result was wide disaffection with unions, especially among people who were not receiving the direct benefits of protective labor contracts and who were personally inconvenienced by the numerous strikes. Although labor continued to grow numerically and in bargaining strength, its public relations again suffered as it fought to keep the economic gains made during the years of prosperity.

6: COMING OF AGE

THE generally unfavorable atmosphere that surrounded organized labor during the immediate postwar period erupted into restrictive legislative action by the Republican Congress that took over Capitol Hill in the fall elections of 1946. This action was encouraged by management's contention that modern-day unions were so large and economically powerful that only restrictive legislation would make true collective bargaining possible for the management side.

Unfair Labor Practices

Certain restrictive bills had already been passed by the Democrats in 1946, but with passage over Truman's veto of the Labor-Management Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley) the generally favorable posture of the Federal Government shifted to one of unbending opposition to certain basic union practices.

The closed shop and secondary boycotts were banned; other arrangements such as the union shop, checkoff (by which union dues are withheld from the pay envelope and paid into the union treasury by the employer), welfare funds, and grievance and contract procedures were restricted or regulated by law.

A list of "unfair labor practices," which made certain union activities illegal, was incorporated in the Taft-Hartley Act. These had to do with organizing campaigns, dues, and initiation fees, featherbedding (compelling wages for services not actually rendered), and striking at the time of the expiration of a labor contract. Also written into the law were regulations regarding strikes in which the national interest is imperiled. One hotly disputed provision of the new law, Section 14, paragraph (b), held that "nothing in this act shall be contrived as authorizing . . . agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment in any state or territory in which such execution or application is prohibited by state or territorial law."

The immediate result of this policy was the enactment in nineteen states of right-to-work laws, which prohibited the union shop and other "maintenance of membership" agreements between management and the unions. The threat to union security that these laws posed in the hands of those who wanted to destroy unions caused a flurry of political activity in the Congressional elections of 1958, with labor successfully defeating right-to-work candidates in the key states of California and Ohio.

Despite pledges from both Republican and Democratic Congressmen, organized labor was not able to achieve amendment of the most objectionable features of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947. Indeed, both labor leaders and the rank and file lost their enthusiasm to rid organized labor of this legis-

lative curb on its activity during the relatively high employment and prosperous years of the Eisenhower Administration.

Between 1949 and 1956 there was an unprecedented number of strikes as the unions fought to offset the effects of inflation. In the South, where antiunion feeling runs high, there were some bitter struggles and setbacks in the CIO organizing campaign, but the violence of the earlier days was, for the most part, absent from the industrial disputes of the fifties. Most contracts were negotiated without a serious loss of man-hours despite the fact that of about 125,000 agreements, more than 70,000 were reviewed annually. Management and the unions worked peacefully together in many communities. In some cases the unions lent money to employers to expand plant facilities, build new factories, and stave off bankruptcy.

Two Groups Unite

On December 5, 1955, the twenty-year split between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations was healed. These two great federated groups fused into the AFL-CIO. George Meany, who had succeeded William Green as president of the AFL in 1952, became the president of the new united federation. Meany had initiated the merger discussions and had been a leader in the fight against communist elements in the labor movement on the national and international front. Walter Reuther, president of the CIO, worked with equal zeal for merger and for the elimination of radicalism. He then became the head of the Industrial Union department of the new AFL-CIO.

The merger convention in December, 1955, seated 103 AFL and 30 CIO unions, and two CIO organizing committees. Some 60,000 local unions affiliated to national unions, and about 1,000 local unions directly affiliated to the federation, form the organizational base of the AFL-CIO. These local unions were expected to merge their city and state central groups, which held membership in the old AFL and CIO, by December, 1957. In some cases, however, a multitude of organizational and jurisdictional problems accompanied mergers on the city and state level.

In addition to six trade departments (Building Trades, Railway, Metal, Maritime, Union Label, and Industrial Unions), the AFL-CIO has committees that deal with legislation, political education, international affairs, civil liberties, and many other aspects of civic and cultural concern for the American society. Its Ethical Practices Committee came into national prominence during the protracted hearings on corruption in labor and management held by the McClellan Committee in 1958. The Ethical Practices Committee set

the stage for the expulsion of gangster-infested unions, including the million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Across the country prophecies of fear and gloom were raised at the spectacle of a new united labor movement. Cries of "labor monopoly" and "political influence" warned of the possibilities for evil that were potential in the new size and centralization that labor achieved in the reunion. Certainly a new concentration of power means new possibilities for aggrandizement and manipulation. But it is doubtful that the AFL-CIO will ever have the control over its member unions that is necessary for an effective instrument of tyranny. Moreover, there is little truth in the claim that the aspiration of men like Reuther and Meany is to subvert American democratic institutions and the system of free enterprise. The labor movement has come of age in the United States. The old dreams of a national labor party motivated by a communist or socialist ideology no longer impel the leadership of the great national unions or those who hold the reins of the merged federation.

The struggle with radicalism, the scandals that surrounded the handling of welfare funds, and the antics of individual officials like Beck and Hoffa have undoubtedly injured the prestige of the new federation. Church and civic leaders have deplored the evi-

dences of violence and corruption in the labor movement, but no more so than the respected leaders of the AFL-CIO themselves.

The Future

Many church people know little about the world of industry. They know even less about the subtleties of maintaining a union against the pressures of increased organizational complexity, apathy, opportunistic racketeering, and antiunion employers. Yet, these church members are the socially sensitive, civic-minded persons in the typical American community who can do most to help the labor movement clean its house and at the same time protect itself against those interests which are unqualifiedly opposed to social democracy and economic equality.

The future of the American labor movement, with its widening concern to be a socially responsible partner not only with management but with the community, is closely bound to the future of the American churches as they rediscover their cultural role in a revolutionary world. Perhaps a first step for the churches is to help their own people recall the way by which the unions have come into their maturity and perceive not only the dangers therein but the tremendous opportunities for justice and social welfare for all Americans and for people everywhere.

NIT II

Our Mechanized Society

1: DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

A NATIONALLY known labor official spoke, in 1957, before a great conference of Presbyterian men meeting in Chicago. He found himself facing a hostile audience. His frank criticism of the church and its attitude toward labor unions was greeted with boos and catcalls from the Presbyterian men.

In the summer of 1958, a number of Presbyterian women reacted somewhat more courteously but with no less vehemence to a panel on organized labor at the Purdue Assembly. Following the meeting the moderator and the panel members were set upon offstage by a group of angry corporation wives. These women were incensed that "such a one-sided picture of labor unions" should be presented to Christian women who knew better and whose husbands were having "an awful time with those labor leaders."

Responsible Christian Laymen

No one should be surprised that a large number of United Presbyterian lay men and women look with a undiced eye upon the labor unions. Any survey of a typical group of United Presbyterians in a regional gathering or summer conference will reveal that union members are a tiny minority. In most sections of the

country, only the Protestant Episcopal Church will show a comparable dearth of industrial workers and craftsmen. Both denominations draw heavily upon the white-collar, suburban middle class—professional men and the wives of these physicians, lawyers, teachers, corporation managers, engineers.

This is certainly not to say that the United Presbyterian Church is hostile to organized labor. Not only do we have people like John Ramsey of the AFL-CIO, and Mildred Jeffrey of the UAW who are at once loyal church members and high-ranking officials in the labor movement, but many other United Presbyterians, both ministers and laymen, who have refused to consign organized labor to the outer darkness. What is probably more true is that the social and economic status of most Presbyterians removes them from those experiences in our industrial society which stimulate a sense of identification with wage earners and their need for collective security.

"Our kind of people," for the most part, simply do not know what it means to be a number on a time-card, to work irregularly because of technical lay-offs, or to be hounded out of a job by a foreman who wants to upgrade his wife's cousin. The daily problems and

complexities of the industrial world tend to be unfamiliar to us.

Since 1903, our Board of National Missions—and, since 1944, its Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations, established by Marshall Scott—has devised effective programs to help church and labor and management understand one another better. But these efforts alone cannot be expected to change the posture of the United Presbyterian Church. Certainly, as more industrial workers “get ahead” and move into suburbia or take on the social attitudes and aspirations of the older middle class, the church will become more aware that industrial work is respectable. Still, for some time to come, the United Presbyterian Church will continue to minister to people whose political, economic, and social outlook will lean toward that of management rather than labor.

Middle-class people are the strong backbone of American culture. They are free enough from economic worries to engage in sustained study and action for criticism and reform. They are united in a multitude of voluntary associations for civic betterment and human welfare. Thus they need continually to be confronted with the meaning and objectives of a socially responsible labor movement. They are by no means to be discounted, for no other segment of our society is so fitted materially and intellectually to develop that mature and sophisticated approach to the problems of economic power in technical society which can save both management and labor from excessive idolatries. The problem the churches face is how to maintain an encounter between the world of industry and the world of their members. How can they come to a better understanding of the difficult ethical choices that both labor and management must make? How can they bring into their thinking the cultural analyses and theological insights of responsible Christians?

Enlightened Insights and Practices

Since 1910 the General Assembly of The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has recognized that organized labor and the problems of industrial relations are of vital concern to the churches. In that year a special committee of the Assembly called for “the application of Christian principles in the conduct of industrial organizations, whether of labor or capital.” In 1920 the Assembly recognized the right of workers to organize and to bargain collectively. In 1944 an Advisory Committee, created by action of the 154th General Assembly, presented a definitive statement on management, labor, and the economic order that has been the official policy of the church since its adoption.

This report was made in a day when labor had not yet achieved the organizational unity and economic power that reside in the AFL-CIO and the great independent unions today. But its accents correctly describe the values of labor organizations and their strategic importance to the life and work of the church.

The following is an excerpt from Section B of the report dealing with the contributions of organized labor and the response of the Christian church:

1. The labor movement has given the hungry soul a sense of belonging. Man today is in rebellion against the multiplicity of impersonal relationships that our mechanized society forces upon him. The strongest justification of the labor union to the man who works is a spiritual one, namely, the satisfaction that it gives to his deep sense of wanting to belong.

2. The labor union affords a constructive outlet for an individual's resentment against injustice and his demand for fair play. Unemployment, low wages, and bad working conditions not only inflict physical scars, but they also heap spiritual indignity and frustration upon workers as people. Through sharing in his union, the worker is able to give voice to his inner drive for justice.

3. Labor unions have been instrumental in achieving a higher standard of living and in improving working conditions. They have helped to obtain safety and health measures against occupational risk; to achieve a larger degree of protection against child labor; to relieve the disabled, the sick, the unemployed; and to gain a more equitable share in the value of what they produce. These and other gains which labor unions have done much to win have reached far beyond their own membership and have benefited those who have not shared in the activity.

4. At their best, unions have been a primary agent of democracy. Democracy in industry is something other than benevolent paternalism. It concerns the independent status of the individual worker in relation to his employer. The labor union helps to lift this status into the framework of democracy when representatives of labor's own choosing meet with representatives of management's own choosing in reference to matters of mutual concern.

5. Through the labor union, the rich spiritual, intellectual, and social resources latent in those who work become operative in community and nation. With the industrial process increasingly mechanized, and with the opportunity for advancement steadily narrowed, the typical individual worker finds himself frustrated in making his personal contribution to industry and to the community. The labor movement has helped many an individual to find himself in meaningful co-operation with his fellows. In the opportunity to participate in the life of the labor union, the worker has the chance to develop capacities for leadership, and, thereby, he feels he has more to give as neighbor and as citizen.

The report continues:

1. We believe the Christian church must confront its members who are employees with their obligation to consider their relationship to a labor union in the light of the Christian principle of social responsibility.

We believe industrial relations generally stand a stronger possibility of improvement when management and labor are organized.

2. The church as an institution is an employer of labor and as such is involved in employer-employee relationships, as are philanthropic and humanitarian organizations such as social welfare agencies, hospitals, orphanages, etc. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the church and its agencies, together with other non-profit organizations, to bring the most enlightened insights and practices to bear upon its relationships with employees.

Primary Fact: Interdependence

There is no question that this balanced statement is still worthy of study by church members as a responsible approach to organized labor. The two years that followed its adoption (1946-1947), critical years for industrial relations in the United States, found the General Assembly making strong pronouncements in the field of economic life.

For instance, in 1946 the Assembly declared:

"The Christian often becomes aware of the crisis involved in a work stoppage without at the same time

being capable of fairly judging the merits of the dispute because of ignorance of important factors. When a strike occurs, Christians should be as sensitive to the sins of omission as to the sins of commission on the part of both labor and management. Because of its refusal to take action on working conditions or wages, management may be more responsible for a strike than the labor union that takes overt strike action. Before condemning either labor or management for the cause of a strike, Christians are morally obligated to investigate conditions and know the facts."

In 1947 the Assembly said:

"The employer today is frequently not an individual in the old sense, but a company or a corporation. Today freedom of association is as crucial as freedom of the individual was in an earlier day. Man, henceforth, will seek security in community. The primary fact about society has always been interdependence. To be specific, the sooner we have in America strong unions which exercise democratic control over their members and are not constantly harassed and made to fight for their lives, the sooner can responsibility be confidently placed upon them and demanded of them."

2: DEEPLY FELT DESIRES

AN UNDERSTANDING of what working people really want would seem to be a *must* for the employer who desires good relations with the persons he employs. In case after case friction and conflict between labor and management have been aggravated by the employer's failure to appreciate the true goals of the hourly rate worker.

It is important also for the public to be aware of what labor wants if it is to interpret at all correctly the workers' side in a time of labor dispute. Criticisms of labor's actions often reveal a conspicuous ignorance of the workers' motives. As to the churches, if they are to be at all effective in reaching workingmen and their families, or in speaking to the issues of labor-management relations, nothing is more essential than an understanding of the goals of labor.

The trouble is that relatively little serious attention has been given to the question of what the worker really wants in his job. One would expect the labor union leader to be helpful here, but he is usually so preoccupied either with pressing union business (if he is a national or regional officer) or with the daily problems of the men he serves (if he is a local union agent) that he is a poor interpreter of the worker's most deeply felt desires. In talking about these goals we are speaking of what the workers who make up the labor movement really want by way of on-the-job satisfactions. These are: security, opportunity, recognition, and dignity.

Security and Opportunity

The efforts of American labor to achieve such protections as pension, medical insurance, job tenure based on seniority, and other employment and income guarantees emphasize the importance of security to the workingman. Indeed, surveys reveal again and again that for most workers job security is a higher goal than immediate monetary gain.

The modern industrial worker feels the precariousness of his position. He may possess certain valuable skills, but he does not own the tools or the means by which his skills are put to use. Only the weekly pay envelope stands between him and calamity. His besetting fear is unemployment. He remembers periods of idleness through which he and his family, or his friends and their families, have endured incredible hardships.

The worker's first and major defense against job insecurity has been the labor union. The organized worker looks upon his union as the most important safeguard against the hazards and uncertainties of modern industrial employment.

Here is the secret, so baffling to many employers, of the worker's loyalty to his union. The industrial worker often identifies his own security so completely with the labor union to which he belongs that he will put aside his own personal interests for those of the union. Workers will strike for weeks and months over

a matter of a few cents an hour, knowing that even though they win the strike it will take years of full employment to recoup their losses, if they believe that the integrity and prestige of their union are threatened. They may be critical of their union and its leaders, and negligent in attending union meetings, but when the test comes the ranks hold firm.

Wages are an important factor in security. But most workers think it is even more important to be sure of continued employment. They would rather keep relatively low-paying jobs in which the risk of unemployment is lower than take jobs in which risk and pay are high. This is especially true of workers with heavy obligations.

Another deeply felt desire of the workingman is to get ahead, to improve his lot. He wants to be able to advance to a better job in both pay and prestige. He cherishes for his family more privileges, more opportunities.

Labor unions have been able to assist the worker in achieving the goal of opportunity chiefly through the elimination of favoritism. Nearly all labor-management contracts include clauses that greatly minimize the element of whim and chance in the movement of workers from job to job within the plant. Many unions also provide training courses and other experiences through which the workers may fit themselves for better jobs.

The majority of workers believe that advancement is governed chiefly by two factors—quality of work and willingness to work. They also list length of service and co-operation as important elements. Only infrequently do workers say that one has to be a relative of the boss or the foreman to win a promotion.

Surveys show, however, that workers on the whole feel that opportunities for advancement in their present jobs are very limited. They believe that even if they do their work with great zeal and skill, they will not be promoted. A chief complaint of many workers is that their employers do not provide enough opportunities for getting ahead. This frustration is an aggravating factor, sometimes a root cause, in not a few instances of tension in industrial relations.

Recognition and Dignity

A third deeply cherished goal of labor is completely noneconomic in nature. It is the worker's desire to be counted as part of the production team in industry. The desire to achieve status, to be recognized and appreciated, is one of the most subtle and powerful of human motives.

Relations between labor and management have often been based on the assumption that workers are motivated primarily, if not altogether, by economic interests—wages, side benefits, job security, opportunities for promotion. In its relations with consumers, management has long recognized the importance of sentimental and emotional factors. Long past due in many sections of American industry is the similar

consideration of the workingman's need for simple human appreciation.

Well remembered is labor's strong resentment of the early scientific technicians and efficiency experts who looked upon the workers as so many hands and feet to be put through certain prescribed motions. The worker appreciates the training that enables him to do his job more easily and better, but in it all, and above all, he wants to be treated as a human being.

The worker feels that he has much more to contribute to his job than brawn and skills. This lies back of the demand on labor's part for greater participation in industry. A worker may look upon conferences and committees as slow torture, but he deeply wants the recognition that goes along with the right to have some voice in plant policy and operation. He wants to be counted as a member of the team.

A related noneconomic goal is the worker's desire to know the meaning of his job and to feel that his work is important. He wants to know how his particular assignment, whatever it may be, fits into the whole of a worth-while enterprise.

For a workingman to feel that his labor is unimportant, his efforts useless and wasted, is more damaging to self-esteem than almost anything that can happen to him. Hence the bitterness of many unemployed men during the great depression of the thirties who were assigned to insignificant, poorly planned, and badly managed relief jobs. Hence, too, the growing dissatisfaction of thousands of industrial workers in the inner recesses of huge plants who never see the results of their efforts in the finished products.

A great deal used to be said about the demoralizing effect of the assembly line where a worker performed a single unvaried task all day long, day after day. Repetitive work is now known to be less damaging than many have supposed. Far worse in its effect upon the worker is the feeling that his unexciting assignment is also unimportant.

During the last world war, worker morale was greatly stimulated whenever the Government sent men into the plants to explain the purpose and use in the war effort of the things the workers were helping to produce. Alert managers of large plants today are discovering the value of helping workers to understand the place of their jobs in the total enterprise.

There was a time when a craftsman derived great satisfaction from finishing a product and delivering it to a customer. Now very few workmen, no matter how skilled they may be, have anything like that experience. Yet the joy of achievement is close to being an elemental human need.

To have a job with meaning and dignity, so that working brings satisfactions beyond wages, it something every worker wants.

Workers Are Human Beings

There is nothing unique or mysterious about these goals. They are essentially the same as the goals

cherished by people in nearly all walks of life. They spring from fundamental human motives.

The "demands" that labor makes in its bargaining sessions with management can be identified in nearly every particular with one or another of the four goals we have just discussed. Sometimes local situations lift up other issues. A union leader, for example, may be influenced by personal or institutional motives more than by what the workers really want, or a plant repre-

sentative may be so negative in his attitude toward organized labor as to distort the whole proceeding.

Apart from local deviations, however, the things the workers universally seek to achieve in their dealings with management, the things that make for real satisfaction, may be expressed in the four goals: job security, a chance to advance, recognition as part of the production team, and the feeling that their work is important.

3: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

YESTERDAY was one of my better days. Not that anything special or wonderful took place; it was simply a productive and satisfying twenty-four hours. It was such a good day in so many ways, I'm still trying to find out why.

Most mornings I get up with a kind of resentment toward a fate that forces me to leave the warm comfort of my electric blanket and face the cold winds of the working world. I resent leaving my loving home and pleasant neighbors to go to work with a group of strangers. I dislike giving the best eight hours of effort in the day to an employer who has no personality but is merely "the Corporation." I don't appreciate one little bit doing a monotonous and never-ending job, the results of which I hardly ever see. And finally, I resent having to help produce a finished product that seems to me to be rather unnecessary and useless in our world. For all these reasons I heartily subscribe to the sentiments of the parts-department clerk who reopened a small carton and observed, "Nuts."

But yesterday was different and unusual. And I suppose the reason for it is not hard to find. Even though I worked harder than most days, and even though I put in considerably more than eight hours doing it, one thing was particularly different: I enjoyed it and was satisfied by it. I was working for myself, at home. I washed and put up some storm windows, painted part of the trim on the house, and repainted some places where the putty had cracked and fallen out. Nothing very special, really.

The reason I mention it at all is that it points up the problems we face when we think about work and what it means in our kind of world. When I think further about yesterday, I see three things different from most days:

First, *I was working for myself*, I was "my own boss." And, of course, I worked harder than I usually do. No one demanded that I work hard and no one was watching over me to see how I was doing—no one except my wife. All the things I did yesterday were done voluntarily and without instructions.

Secondly, *I was doing some important and useful work*. The trim obviously needed paint. Even the neighbors told me. So as I painted away and puttied around I had the satisfaction of knowing I was doing

something useful that improved the appearance of the house and the neighborhood, helped preserve the house from the weather, and helped maintain the dollars-and-cents value of my investment.

Finally, the work I did yesterday was satisfying because *I could see the end result of my efforts*. What I had done was there to see. I was able to walk around the house and point out to myself the freshly painted trim and the securely fastened storms. The clear result of my labors was everywhere to be seen, and it pleased me.

Working for Money

Yesterday's experience was reassuring. I know exactly why my work was meaningful and satisfying to me. I am sure that this sort of work is well within the purpose of God for human life, because it added something tangible and good to my life and my family's as well as to the neighborhood where I live. So perhaps all we need to do is talk about applying these three standards to all the work we get paid for doing. Then all working people will find meaning, satisfaction, and purpose in their daily work.

But this is just where the whole idea breaks down. These three standards cannot be applied to most of the work we are employed to carry on today. If we used them as yardsticks in deciding whether to accept or reject a job, most of us would starve to death.

What kind of world would it take to permit everyone to work for himself? It would have to be a pre-industrial world, a society of farms and small shops in which industry and commerce depend primarily on individual effort and initiative. We should have to go back to the thirteen colonies at the time of the Revolutionary War. Much as a person may dream about being his own boss, it is not in the cards for the great majority of us. Like it or not, the percentage of "self-employed" decreases each year and may be expected to continue to do so.

Well, if we can't all work for ourselves, how about the second point: doing work that is important and useful? This doesn't seem like asking too much, that the work we do be worth doing in terms of the genuine human need for the finished product. Yet how many of us work hard and long each day to produce

either goods or services that no one really needs? What about the twenty-five men referred to in the first article of Unit I, who spent so many creative hours trying to name a new detergent? *Fortune* described their effort as "deep thinking." Others might say it was a miserable waste of time. In any case, we should be hard put to defend this sort of activity as "important and useful," at least as we usually think of these terms.

Finally, what about doing work in which we can "see the end result of our efforts"? Some people are still fortunate enough to have this sort of work, but an increasing number do not. The man who puts the ash-tray doors into the instrument panel of a new car usually never sees the finished product, the completed car. If he does, he can never be sure whether he or one of the other ash-tray installers put in that particular ash-tray door. A clerk who files papers has a hard time pointing to any finished product that is the result of her labors and that gives lasting satisfaction. Probably her greatest satisfaction is a clean desk, indicating that the job is done.

The conclusion is that in our kind of world the more traditional methods of seeing meaning and gaining satisfaction in work are rapidly disappearing. If work is to have meaning beyond simply earning a living, and if Christians are to be able to understand their work as a service to God, we must find new ways of understanding what we are doing and why. If we do not find this new understanding, we shall see an increasingly large group of people simply working for money and finding meaning in the life they are able to live, because of that money, away from the job.

Rapport at Work

As a start toward a new understanding of work in our kind of industrial society, we need to recognize that we are less and less likely to find satisfaction and meaning in work individually. That is, a single worker doing a single job will not be able to see the results and reap the satisfaction that comes with these results. The meaning of work needs to be seen in terms of a collective accomplishment. The work you do depends on the work others do. Without them your efforts count for nothing, and vice versa. We *need* one another to accomplish anything at all. This is true of an office, a sales force, an assembly line, or a union. If we accomplish anything, we do it together.

This means that the whole area of our human relations comes to have a particularly important place in work. My need for the other worker is as obvious as his need for me, if we are to be productive. This common dependence points up our common need to share our lives on other levels than work itself. There will be little satisfaction in doing your job and ignoring those around you. If you do not know what moves, agonizes, warms, and delights them, you will have a wooden relation, empty of human meaning. The inter-

dependence of work will increasingly force the interdependence of the people who perform the work. It is the human rapport among workers that redeems most work and makes it possible to do it. Our mutual dependence may even make clear to us the need to love one another.

Making Jobs

Work will also need to be understood not so much in terms of the usefulness of the product as in terms of the effect of the production and consumption of the product in society. This year's new cars are not noticeably more useful than, say, the 1958 models. And as far as need and usefulness go, only a small percentage of the new car owners this year really *had* to have a new one. However, the millions of Americans who depend on the sale of new automobiles for their income very much need to have these cars sold. For the men who make the car, its usefulness is in providing them with jobs. And, in fact, the whole point of a corporation like the Ford Motor Company is to provide jobs. The sale of Fords makes work for thousands of Ford employees from Henry Ford II on down. Likewise, at least part of the meaning of a job at Ford Motor Company is to make possible the continuation of the company and of the jobs it provides. A vice-president of that company would have a hard time justifying his job on the grounds that what the company produces is desperately needed by the nation. However, he might have a good case if he looks on his job as a means of enabling others to have jobs.

I am not sure how far we can carry this argument in talking about a Christian understanding of daily work. But I am sure that looking at work in terms of the other jobs it produces makes more sense than kidding about fulfilling pressing needs among consumers. As we noted at the outset of the first unit, we are now at the place where we must consume things we don't need just to keep the whole show rolling.

One Certainty

In case you feel somewhat frustrated about work and its Christian meaning, don't let it get you down. Everyone is somewhat confused at this point. Few people are entirely sure about the value of their work and how they serve God in the doing of it. Some have quit thinking about it. It gives them a headache. Some have simply become *more* confused by talking about how we can "stop all this swearing" that goes on at work, as if petty morals were the problem. Some say that what's good for General Motors is good for the United States and even for God himself. Some of the clergy still talk about doing an honest day's work as if that solved all problems and raised none. Some people even go so far as to enter the ministry, after years in another sort of work, thinking that here at last they will be able "really to serve God."

One thing, however, is certain; only the people who do the work can discover its meaning for their faith.

The Rigid Darkness

By Fred J. Denbeaux

1: THE INFLEXIBILITY OF THE DEVIL

SATAN is the father of negativity. Like all his servants, whether within or without the church, he is primarily an obstructionist. He would rather have the pleasure of being uniquely responsible for delaying the Kingdom of God for one hour than serve on the welcoming committee.

Satan is a destroyer rather than a creator. Those who wreck buildings always have a simpler task than those who design and build them. To create a building involves facing a multiplicity of problems, of material, of design, of physics, of workmanship. To topple a building requires only single-mindedness.

The Power of the Lord

God builds a world; the devil destroys it. It takes longer to develop good than to create evil. God works hard.

Christian theology has sometimes got God and Satan mixed up; at least the descriptions of them have been mixed up. God has frequently been described as strong, single-minded, changeless, and the Devil has been thought of as a weak and shifty fellow. The reverse may well be true.

In many ways the devil is more powerful than God. There are things the devil can do that God cannot. The devil can destroy, but God has committed himself to fulfillment.

The devil is free. God is not: he loves man. The devil is complete within himself. God is not: he is involved. The devil cannot be touched, but man has a hook in the heart of God.

The devil has a determined look. God weeps.

Are Christians correct in describing God as changeless and imperturbable? Is God to be thought of as a kind of cosmic IBM machine?

In the Bible, God is not only thought of as changeable but he is understood as being influenced. Why else could the prayer be uttered, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34)?

So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near, and said, "Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from thee to do

such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Wilt thou destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." Again he spoke to him, and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." (Gen. 18: 22-29.)

God may be immune, but not to prayers. God may be unavailable to the proud, but he hears the cries of his people, Israel. God may be strong, but no sparrow falls without his knowledge. God may harden his heart, but he hears those who call him. The people of God are sinful but not expendable.

The devil is a fanatic. He cannot be called upon. He does not change *his* mind. He knows what he wants, and nobody talks him out of it.

The power of the devil is ambition. The power of God is his suffering love. The devil, who has eyes of steel, looks straight ahead. God's gaze is broken, for he hears the whimper of every lonely child. The devil goes resolutely onward, but God is easily diverted. Wherever there is need, on the battlefields and in the slums, there God is found. No emperor can interrupt the devil, but any beggar can gain the attention of God.

The highest that men can know is never safe. In each generation he is wounded. He is patient and long-suffering. He is God.

How could Christians ever have believed that God was implacable, unyielding? God is love, and his love causes him to stand poised, anxious, hopeful, helpful. He who could destroy renounces destruction.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim!

How can I hand you over, O Israel!

How can I make you like Admah!

How can I treat you like Zeboiim!

My heart recoils within me,

my compassion grows warm and tender.

I will not execute my fierce anger,

I will not again destroy Ephraim;

for I am God and not man,

the Holy One in your midst,

and I will not come to destroy.

(Hos. 11: 8-9.)

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In Whose Image?

Strange that he who lives by such sensitive love should be thought of as hard of heart. Even stranger still that man, created in God's image, should in the name of God do the devil's work.

It is easier for man to be negative than to create. Every church committee has at least one obstructionist. He is single-minded, and thanks to him nothing works. His malice or his sourness insures that the committee will need to work overtime if it is to accomplish its purpose.

Schools need to be built, atomic energy needs to be controlled, diplomacy needs to be made more sensitive. The alert citizen faces a multitude of conflicting but honest responsibilities, but the devil's creature is single-minded. He sees only one goal, segregation.



Keep whites and blacks apart, keep humanity from coming together, and the battle is won.

Those who are struggling with the problem of justice in America will surely have some sympathy for God's problem. For unlike the devil, God has a complex world to build.

Is man built in the image of God or the devil? Once thinkers thought it was proper to ask, "Can men prove the existence of God?" In our day it is more proper to ask, "Can men demonstrate the existence of the devil?" The answer is yes. Wherever there are fanatics, wherever men lack sensitivity, wherever they are too sure of themselves, there Satan has created the proofs of his existence.

In whose image? The aim of the devil is upward. He wants to be God, and he wants to stand tall. But God moves in the opposite direction: he comes down, he makes himself small.

The devil wants to be sure. He covets an iron certi-

tude; God merely trembles and weeps for Jerusalem.

The sin of paganism is that it will not listen to any voice that does not beat according to its rhythm. The sin of Christians is that they lust for an unshakable conviction. But God gave up his cosmic Kingdom for a stable. Christians want no stable; of *that* they have had enough. They want a proper castle with a moat and a drawbridge. They want to be sure.

To Stumble or Strut?

If God really did become small for our sake, there are several questions we must ask ourselves. What should be our attitude toward our non-Christian neighbors? How much pride or smugness is tolerable? How sure of ourselves should we be? Which is more important, conviction or compassion?

What about the campaign slogan, "I would rather be right than President"? To what extent can Christians take this position? Can they ever hope to be that convinced? Must they not struggle within the uncertainties of life, believing but never actually knowing?

Do they face the world resolutely or with trembling? One cannot help but have the feeling that modern Christianity has created the idea that a man must be a heroic believer, that he must be able to stand every test. At the same time, the observer cannot help but have the feeling that the contemporary church is somewhat embarrassed by weakness or failure. May it not be that the mark of the Christian is weakness rather than strength, that he stumbles rather than struts into faith?

Contemporary Christianity makes rigid judgments on the world. It creates bad words like *pagan*, *secular*, *worldly*. When God became man he became truly man, but perhaps the church does not have enough of the divine love to become truly incarnate in the world. It is too sure in its judgments. It sees too clear a line between its life and the life of the world. It is not in the world. It does not bear the sin of the world. It is ashamed of the world, but it does not love the world.

The church withdraws because it wants to be pure. It does not want to associate with sinners; but Jesus did not fear to be called "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (*Luke 7: 34*).

The church is single-minded. As such it serves Satan, since God and Christ wasted their strength in compassion. Jesus did not separate himself. He lived within the world, he was the friend of the outcast. He would rather eat with those who had been repudiated than with those who were respectable. He lacked the sense of propriety that belongs to those who will risk nothing for love.

Can the church be reborn in our generation? Can it risk everything? As God did! Or will it continue to protect itself, to believe in itself, to trust in its mask of righteousness? Can the church live by love, go into the world, stumbling and trusting, uncertain

and without shame? For love knows no shame, love knows only its need—to forgive, to share, to heal.

The Outcasts

But the devil has a clear mind. And wherever men look neither to the right nor to the left, wherever they are sure, wherever they are certain of their morality, there a dark being is served, a being who once fell from heaven and who ever since has been en-

listing those who will help him make his proud march across the ramparts of heaven.

But the devil errs. Heaven has no walls. It is at the foot of a hill. Anyone can enter who is not proud, who is not ashamed of the comrades already gathered.

All the righteous are gone. No one is left except the worldly ones, the outcasts who know that heaven has come to earth, that God comes in love and, for the sake of love, becomes an outcast too.

2: THE DEMONIC VERSUS SATAN

GOD is more complicated than the evil one. The devil easily destroys; but God allows himself to be limited by human freedom. The devil is stationary; but God, because of his love, is sometimes off balance.

Varnished Christians

Before the church can communicate its gospel, it must understand the needs of the world that is being addressed. Lately, the church has seemed to assume that the world craves certitude. The church has concluded that people are seeking to escape the insecurities of their day. They seek a haven from the storms of life. They need protection from the relativities that continually possess them and grind away at their nerves.

The modern church, therefore, tries to communicate the gospel by building a secure wall that will protect people from the vicissitudes of life. So convinced is the church of the necessity of security that it has, itself, lost faith in freedom.

What is the image of itself that the church has presented to the contemporary world? In city after city, continent after continent, the church has advertised itself through the figure of a high-powered evangelist. And what has the world observed? Sensitivity of conscience? Wisdom in the face of complexity? Indeed not! The gospel that has been presented has suggested an iron conviction, an unyielding confidence that Christianity has the answer to every problem. Surely the spectacle of thousands of sure-footed men and women walking down a spotlighted aisle suggests a grotesque interpretation of the gospel.

If the modern world—its creative artists and thinkers—has resisted evangelism, it may be that it suspects that Jesus had more to offer than do his contemporary interpreters. Conceivably Jesus, who was sacrificed because of the ancient world's quest for security, may himself be out of harmony with the technique of modern ecclesiasts. Jesus seemed, modern methods notwithstanding, to have an aversion to publicity. (See *Mark 1: 44*, for instance.) He asked no recognition for himself as he struggled with great agony of spirit to understand his own unique destiny. He was glad to recognize that God's work was being done by outsiders (as *Luke 9: 49-50* suggests). He

encouraged his followers to work unostentatiously. He declared that not all who made public confession would inherit the Kingdom of God. (*Matt. 7: 21*.) Indeed, God's blessing would come to those who engaged in the quiet service of visiting the sick, clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry. (*Ch. 25: 31-46*.) Jesus taught and lived with a modesty that contemporary Christianity should not ignore.

There may be a great gulf between the varnished confidence of modern Christians and the sensitive agony of Jesus of Nazareth. If so, then Jesus is in a better position to understand the hunger of the world. The world does not search for divine and omniscient knowledge. If it did, then it would be uncreatively and sinful. What it seeks is compassion, warmth, and understanding.

Our own world—and this may not include the church if it has surrendered to insensitivity—suffers from fear and guilt. It seeks some word that will help it to remember what it is so desperately trying to forget. And, in that same word, it seeks the assurance that what it cannot forget, God has forgiven.

Desensitizing Shadows

The world suffers today not from Satan but from the demonic. What is the demonic? Just as the medieval world tended to personalize evil by thinking of a single cosmic figure, so it is more useful for the modern world to think of evil in terms of general uncreative principles that tempt man to destroy himself and his values.

Why do men pursue power and privilege? Not because either of these vanities can contribute a benediction. Why is it that American civilization seems to be unable to save itself from pursuing gadgets and instruments of convenience? Why is it that we permit ourselves, in spite of our own best judgment, to produce newer and more complicated refrigerators instead of making a significant contribution to the penetration of outer space?

These questions are difficult to answer, but we know that we are unable at the moment to give our energies to the goals to which we are most committed. We seem to be under the *compulsion* of forces that we cannot tame. Having given ourselves over to comfort,

we are unable to make the necessary sacrifices to reach the goals in which we really believe.

There may not be any actual little demons at work, but we seem to be under the influence of strange and demonic forces. It is not necessary to personalize these forces. It is conceivable that they represent merely the bent of our own psychology, that we have been trapped by decisions from which we cannot be extricated. Nevertheless, we begin to understand something of the agony of those who know that they are more limited than they realized. With Paul (in *Rom. 7: 15*) we can say: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not *do* what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Who shall deliver us from our compulsions? Who shall save us from the demonic forces that impair our decisions?

A shadow hovers over our world. A spirit frustrates our desire to be creative. Like Faust, the modern man may have sold his soul to Mephistopheles. For the sake of "peace of mind" he has given his support to those forces of security and survival which could promise to hide his guilt. And if the modern man has lost his capacity to be spiritually fertile, it is because he has lost his courage to face his own guilt and believe in his redemption. What is this demonic cloud which hangs over his head? The modern man is weakened by his unconfessed guilt. He is the victim of powers that have frozen his heart and paralyzed his tongue. He can conduct a crusade, but he cannot cry out for mercy. He can make a church into an efficient organization, but he cannot give it a sense of guilt. The modern man takes his sin in his stride.

The modern world has made two dramatic, if not redemptive, contributions to history. It has invented the instruments by which it can invade outer space, and it has created genocide, the crime of deliberately eliminating whole bodies of people. The Germans, by killing six million Jews, paved the way for the modern man's desensitization of conscience. The allies, with their mass bombing of civilians (culminating in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), created an instrument that could lead to race extermination. Meanwhile, the major powers, through their nuclear testing and atomic waste, are, in effect, declaring war upon future generations of unborn children. With each

nuclear explosion, more and more deadly forces are released to impoverish the genetic health of all mankind. The modern world, in the name of peace, races toward extermination. The demonic is king.

The Laughter After

The ghosts of innumerable men, women, and children haunt the modern man. But man does not know how to admit that the ghosts exist, so he cannot confess his guilt. The demonic has taught him to measure his life by efficiency and not by guilt. He measures his successes and forgets his failures. But the more he forgets, the less he can create. Slowly but surely he dries up. His imagination and his courage deteriorate. He cannot create because he continues to remember that there is something he dare not forget. But he cannot remember what it is.

Once, long ago, there was another such culture. It, too, had its guilt. It, too, had its hidden sins. But one night a holy stranger stood on a lonely hill and wept over Jerusalem, and with the sacrament of his tears the city was cleansed.

But the modern man has forgotten how to weep. He is not sure that there is any reason why anyone should weep for him. After all, he has his own standards. He knows what is right and wrong. He pays his bills on time. He believes in God; he refrains from blasphemy. If some savior should weep over his piety, then he would know that the tears were shed, not for him, but for the bad people.

But perhaps there are no good people, only proud people. Perhaps the demonic has dried up our tears so that we cannot weep for six million Jews, for Hiroshima, for the gutted cells of our own genetic future.

We might even, on a dull Sabbath, prefer a showman to a savior. Certainly we prefer unyielding standards to a living and a fragile faith.

The prisoners of the demonic are unable to be ashamed. Being unable either to hope or to weep, they take comfort in newer and more absurd automobiles. Possessing an almost unlimited amount of power, sure of their own standards and judgments, they neither weep nor know that the Messiah cries unheard while his servants make bigger and deadlier bombs.

But while Christ weeps, the devil laughs.

3: RIGIDITY VERSUS FAITH

READERS of the previous discussion may have gained the impression that standards are useless. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Rather, it is in the Biblical faith that standards are both necessary and dangerous.

The Bible assumes that the rhythm of the universe is concerned with good and evil. God and the angels care. Life is sacred. Human beings are not meant to live on a dung heap. The weak need to be protected.

God cares, and the laws of the *cosmos* are not neutral to whatever human beings do to one another.

Human Choices and Divine Mercy

The human being is constrained to make judgments. From infancy he is taught to distinguish between good and bad. He learns to concern himself with justice and injustice. He wants to know who is the aggressor in a war and who the defender. He distinguishes be-

tween liberty and tyranny, between economic justice and economic slavery. Furthermore, he is convinced that God and the order of his universe are involved in these judgments.

At the same time, men suspect that the Bible is right in affirming that God's judgments are not identical with human judgments. Thus:

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, says the
Lord.*

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
(Isa. 55: 8-9.)

They know that, try as they might, there is a dimension of truth beyond them.

What is even worse for their confidence in their judgments, they know that all have fallen short of the glory of God and that the mercy of God is free. Beyond human conceptions of right and wrong, a mercy links together the righteous and the unrighteous, the good and the bad. There is a throne to which beggar and king, believer and unbeliever, saint and sinner must come. And nobody comes with earned credits. He who labors a whole life long in the service of God is not one whit better off than the man who comes into God's courtyard at the very end of his life.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generos-

ity?' So the last will be first, and the first last." (Matt. 20: 1-16.)

Many, in spite of—or perhaps because of—the parable of the workers in the vineyard, will be a little downcast. What use is it then for a man to try to do good if, in the end, no attention is paid to his efforts?

The answer is that, although he must make decisions, it is not by decisions that he is saved. He must have standards in order to create moral judgments, but he does not enter heaven because of his loyalty to *his* standards. Catholics do not get into heaven by drinking wine; Methodists do not make the portals by refraining from smoking any more than Presbyterians do by total abstinence. Each man is entitled to the content of his conscience, and, happily, in addition to that, he has God's mercy to fall back upon.

Sickness Unto Death

God faces two dangers. On the one hand, his redemption is threatened by those who care too little, and on the other hand, by those who care too much. While the moralists and the immoralists battle it out, God waits, hoping that men will remember the patient One in whose likeness man is made.

But while God waits in patient love, the evil one (or the demonic) creates two forms of sickness, either of which will delay the coming of God's Kingdom. Either he convinces men that the situation is hopeless or convinces them that, if they but tighten up their determination, the victory will be won. In either case men lose their likeness to God by despairing or by insisting that they can bring in the divine order.

Many an atheist lacks the patience to believe that a truly ethical society will emerge. Rather than believe that God will triumph over evil, he solves the problem by pretending that there is no good or evil. All morality is, he convinces himself, a matter of opinion. Standards are impossible, since there seems to be no one who can enforce them. Although he does not, necessarily, say, "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," he has no intention of risking disappointment by believing in goodness. His sickness is that he takes the world's resistance so seriously that he cannot believe in a being who will bring the world to its fulfillment. He suffers from a disappointed love. He is the first victim of Satan, for he has surrendered to emptiness and hopelessness.

The atheist is a sad figure, not an evil one. He would like to believe, but he cannot tolerate delay on God's part. His sin is the sin of pathos.

The Christian need take no comfort because there seem to be so many atheists. Satan has energy to spare, and he does not lack challenge when he looks at the Christian. Indeed, the Christian may be even more appetizing since he lives in a fool's paradise. He imagines that he is secure. He could make no greater mistake.

It is in the nature of the demonic to confuse. Evil rarely wears a placard announcing its satanic origins. Indeed, evil is most successful when it masquerades as the good.

The sickness of the Christian, in contrast to that of the atheist, is his potential fanaticism. He is convinced that his morality is linked with that of heaven. He believes that the more he can communicate his standards, the closer heaven will be to earth.

If he is a pacifist, he believes that a refusal to bear arms will usher in a utopian world. If he is in favor of military preparedness (and there are Christians on both sides of these positions), he is sure that his program will guarantee peace. If he is a Democrat, he knows that the concentration of power in the hands of big business will ruin the country. If he is a Republican, he is sure that the solution to all problems is a balanced budget.

The Christian, unlike the atheist, is not unwilling to create a position. Indeed, he cannot abide living in chaos. He knows that being a human being involves making decisions, and with considerable confidence he makes them.

The devilish sin of the Christian is that he trusts

his standards too much. He refuses to yield before the complexity of the world. He is prepared to endorse a new legalism. He is determined to stand for something.

The Devil's Hardness

If the atheist is in danger of forgetting that he has been made in the image of God, the Christian is in danger of forgetting that he is only an image.

Actually, both the atheist and the Christian are wrong, in so far as each avoids the issue of God's redemptive love. Each suffers from an excess of determination; each is too rigid; each has absorbed the devil's hardness. Neither is prepared to accept God's patient and suffering love.

The devil wins whenever a man loses his flexibility; for God created man, and he redeemed man to the end that people might become not stubborn deities but sensitive human beings.

And the devil is discomfited whenever human beings hold their standards lightly. For then he knows that God has given them both the power to act and the contrition to know that it is the divine love, not the righteousness of the human act, that saves them.

4: FROM EVIL DELIVERED

THE Christian both is sensitive to the existence of evil and, paradoxically, knows that evil does not exist. He seeks to impose heaven's will on earth and yet knows that earth has already been won.

The Devil Is Finished—but We Aren't

If the Christian did not acknowledge the temporary and cruel power of evil, he would be callous to suffering. If he did not acknowledge that the *staying* power of that evil had been broken, he would be blind to the persistent tides of love that constantly erode the cliffs of evil.

Because he recognizes injustice, the Christian has created standards that have eliminated sweatshops, slavery (But what about South Africa and Little Rock?), and the exploitation of unorganized labor. Wherever he sees helplessness, his compassion constrains him to create some law or standard by which anguish and suffering can be alleviated, if not eliminated. The Christian is unable to relax into his piety. He feels compelled to build a world acceptable to God. Counting his beads is not enough in a world of hunger, illiteracy, and disease. The Christian is convinced that food, education, and health are necessities, and his standards demand that these necessities be made available to all men, regardless of race or creed.

Although the Christian knows what it means to feel guilty because the Kingdom of God has not yet come, he does not despair. Although he knows that his own generosity is wanting, he does not lose faith in God.

He knows that there are resources far greater than his own muscles. He is convinced that the universe is wider than his outstretched arms. He knows that God is taller and wiser than the Soviet leader. He is convinced that, although the President of the United States may falter, there is a stronger and purer power directing the course of the universe. In brief, the Christian is alert to evil, but he does not believe that it will last forever.

Actually, however, many Christians do put their hands to the plow and look back. Many cannot escape the demonic. This failure is not due to what is ordinarily meant by temptation. Very few people desire evil. Few of us are monsters. The form of evil is not so much temptation as it is dread. Anxiety is the ground on which evil grows. The possibility of disaster is demonically attractive to hearts that cannot quite trust God. For these, the evil one lurks in their concern for what will happen tomorrow, in their fear for the worst. Curiously, the fountain out of which this sin flows is not some form of criminality, but is normality itself. Thus, the love of mothers and fathers creates more possibilities of anxiety and faithlessness than does all the world's debauchery. It is the weakness of good people rather than the immorality of bad people that provides a satisfying homeland for the evil one.

Perhaps there is meaning in this fact. Not all of us can be criminals. If it were not for the fact that the "normal" ones among us also contributed to the

existence of Satan, we should have little understanding of our criminal brothers. Crime, especially the more violent forms, is difficult for ordinary people to understand; and yet every Christian knows that the love to which he has been called has no limits. Every murderer and every rapist is our brother. We all need help; and it helps to know that our own unfaith, our hypnotic relation to dread for our children, gives us a flaw that enables us to understand those criminals, who differ from us only in that their sin is more dramatic and less socially acceptable. There is no reason to assume, however, that our normal sins are more acceptable to God.

A Shield Against Disaster

All standards collapse before the onrush of the divine love. God's redemptive mercy is not put off by human weakness and stubbornness. Men may flirt with evil, but God is faithful and does not recognize evil's existence.

When the gospel was announced, when the good news of God's Kingdom was first proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth, all the demons fled in confusion. The faith of the New Testament is single: *evil has been overcome*. The first disciples were delivered because they were enabled to believe that Satan had fallen, that his house had been plundered and he had been found. (See *Mark 3: 27*.)

This sense of deliverance is Christianity's most significant truth. It is not that we believe God exists, but that God exists for us; not that God wishes us well, but that he has become our champion. It is not that we believe Jesus is some strange kind of divine being, but that as an incarnate and ultimate love he has become our shield against disaster. In Christ a decisive victory is won.

What is the nature of that victory? Is it apparent? Evil still goes on. Jews suffer because of Christian insensitivity; children suffer because of their parents' merger of love with dread; crime continues. If Christ were God and if the victory had been decisive, should not evil have been eliminated?

We cannot give glib answers at this point. We Christians do not have the right to construct some kind of formula that will have us embarrassed. We are responsible for our unfaith and our sin.

And yet there is a new force at work in the world. There is a sense among believers that evil is on its last legs. It may be with us for a time and a season, but it has no ground in eternity. And because Christians know that this evil is limited, they are able to create a new sense of community on earth, the community of redemption.

Now this community of the redeemed is not the church, for the church is only the institution that provides an opportunity to hear the good news and to give thanks. No, this community exists wherever men refuse to take evil seriously, wherever men live in faith and sensitive love.

Whenever a parent is enabled to trust that the world to which he gives his child is God's world, the community of redemption is realized. Whenever a husband or wife receives the grace to understand the other in spite of radically different standards and styles of life, the sacramental community of faith emerges. Whenever an ordinary, everyday person is victorious over his prejudices, whenever he can bring himself to a sense of brotherliness toward a criminal, the fruits of the spirit are being reaped.

Surely the glory of Christianity is its confidence that in God each one of us is brought to his fulfillment. Every man knows that he has reason to fear God, for all have fallen short of his glory; and yet, with the apostle Paul, we know that Christ died for *all*. (See *Rom. 11: 25-36*.) And it is that *all* which provides the final stumbling block to the victory over evil. We are offended because God does not have a sliding scale to his mercy. We would prefer to be in the upper third of the class, even though we cannot be perfect. And it is this final stumbling block which is the test of our ability to live in and by love.

Wrath and Mercy

The love of God triumphs over all human standards. It also triumphs over his own judgment, for God too has set standards. And it is this combination of God's morality and his mercy which has provided the substance for Christian living. Because God requires much from us, we do aim for as moral a life as we can create. But because God provides possibilities of forgiveness, we are saved from the necessity of pretending to an illegitimate virtue. The terrible and wonderful truth of Christianity is that all of us are sinners and the recipients of the divine anger. At the same time, all of us, if we are not proud, receive God's love.

It is the cross that gathers together the wrath and mercy of God. Before the cross we are guilty and are reminded that we do make pacts with evil. But the cross is the prelude to the resurrection, and in the resurrection we are assured that God bears the consequences of our sin.

To believe is to believe that God has made us sinless, that we live in a world in which the mystery of the divine love has triumphed over the hardness and rigidity of evil.

Satan is dead, and each of us lives in the joy of heaven on earth. Pain exists, but evil no longer. And in the measure that we, too, live by that suffering love, our own sensitivity will be increased. We no longer need to triumph, we need no empires to conquer; like God, our fulfillment is in our faithful sensitivity.

To receive that love is to gain confidence in one's self. To give that love is to restore confidence in others. And in the measure that we lead those about us to belief in themselves, we have, with the first disciples, observed that Lucifer has fallen.

Parents' Discussion Group

- ❧ TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION ❧
1. It All Depends—
 2. Learning to Cope with Family Conflicts
 3. "Topartedness"
 4. The Church Has a Steeple
 5. The Old (New?) Family Pew
 6. Anger

IT ALL DEPENDS—

An Interview with Dr. W. Wilson Wren

 THE happy family pictured at play in advertisements seldom has two parents and one child. At least two children can be seen grinning about the product being advertised. Articles written for family guidance, like advertisements, are also virtually bound to deal with families with more than one child. This attention to the American family having more than one child corresponds to the fact. Most American families *are* composed of mother, father, and children. Yet each one of these families at one time or another has been a single-child family. The first child was, for a time, the only child. Furthermore, parents under certain circumstances treat an individual child in their family as an only child. So this business of having an only child is not strange to any family, yet in a society increasingly given to measuring every situation by some standard pattern, the family with *only one* child is thought to be not quite right.

We have long had reservations about the too quick judgments passed by some families on other families on the basis of size alone. And we are often depressed by a terrible statistical habit that leads some learned people to speak of the average family as mother, father, and 2.4 children. We also have a live curiosity about the widely reputed statement of fact that single children are lonesome. So we went to Dr. Wren to find out what he thought about these matters. We began our conversation with him by asking about the reputed lonesomeness of the only child. This is what he answered:

"It all depends. The child does not have to be lonesome if he enjoys a good qualitative relationship with his parents. If this relationship is good, the only child is not necessarily lonesome. He can get from his peers

and other adults enough gratification not to be lonely. But this gratification must fit into a pattern of qualitatively good relationships at home.

"The child in the multiple-sibling family also depends on good qualitative relationships. We realize that it is possible for the child in a multiple-sibling family to be much more lonesome than we conceive of the single child as being. Many times the lonesome child, because of the quality of his first six years of life, is not able to relate to other children, and often has to use special mechanisms in order to get what he *feels* is lacking in his relationships (by having feigned illnesses, temper tantrums, poor school work, and behavioral disturbances). Frequently his lonesomeness doesn't have anything to do with the size of the family in which he finds himself, but is directly related to his immaturity and resultant inability to feel comfortable with others.

"On the other hand, the youngster from the multiple-sibling family may experience considerable difficulty maintaining a satisfactory qualitative relationship with his parents because of frequent displacement by newly arrived siblings. For example, let us say that a certain child is five years old. He has a three-year-old sister and a new baby brother. The mother in this situation has one baby and two children who are acting like babies because they have been dislocated. The baby's arrival changed the routine of the life of the older children. It took the mother's exclusive attention from them and caused it to be placed, as it seems to them, exclusively on the baby. Hence, the mother has three children com-

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peting for her affection. She not only has to handle the pressing needs of the newborn, but also to meet the constant, and sometimes excessive, demands of the two older, yet displaced, children. It is thus difficult to see how this mother can give as much affection, warmth, and understanding to all three children as she could give to any one of them alone. In contrast to this situation, the only child, who supposedly and ideally gets from his parents 100 per cent of their affection, may have to contend with other factors. His routine and sense of security may be upset at various times by premature placement in nursery school because one or both parents work, or by the absence of one parent because of divorce or a traveling father."

We pondered these matters for a while. Before we could ask the doctor to think of situations that would call for reverse judgments, namely, the situation in which a multiple-sibling family (a term the doctor used continually throughout the interview to refer to families having more than one child) finds ways to give enough affection to every child, in contrast to the only-child family in which the child does not get enough affection—before we could ask, he had already embarked on his "on the other hand" statements.

"The only child gets more in quantity and often more in quality from his parents. Frequently he ends up with a greater sense of security. Again, it all depends. If the only child has a good relationship with his parents, he develops a real sense of confidence and self-esteem; he has the feeling of being loved, the feeling of being important, the feeling of being wanted. He develops into a flexible and mature person. On the other hand, when a good child-parent relationship does not exist, the only child finds his natural advantage turned into disadvantage. His intellectual and emotional gifts become tarnished when he is given too much too soon. He has no need to compete for what he can get so easily. He is spoon-fed. He doesn't have to scratch for standing room and recognition, as the child does in the multiple-sibling family. The only child who has a poor relationship with his parents is frequently overgratified by the parents in an attempt to relieve parental guilt. Many times he is given things that are far beyond his needs and capacities, because of his parents' own ambitions. The child in such a situation is really *overstuffed*."

"In a good-quality relationship, the multiple-sibling family offers the optimum opportunity for the child to adjust to other people, to learn to fit his needs in with the needs of others, and to adjust his behavior to several and different siblings. He has to compete regularly, and thereby learns to develop a good sense of 'give-and-take.' The child who has a kind, warm, loving, giving, understanding, and tolerant relationship with his parents has a very definite advantage over the child who is overprotected and overindulged. In other words, a good child-parent relationship is not so much dependent on 'How much?' as upon 'How well?' For instance, the child who has a minimum,

but feels that it is enough, may be happy and secure with his home and family, whereas the overstuffed child may feel that he doesn't have anything that's really important."

Having made his "on the other hand" statements, and before we could ask our next question, the doctor moved into a new and, to us, a surprising area of discussion. He said that the number of siblings in a family, from a psychiatrist's point of view, is not nearly so important as the kind of parents a child has. And by the kind of parents he meant the quality of the environment made by the parents before, during, and after the pregnancy. He pointed out that there are a number of possible environmental situations into which a child may be born. For instance, if the parents are reasonably mature and reasonably well adjusted and want a child with whom to share their love, chances are that this youngster's level of achievement and emotional adjustment will be satisfactory. His progress through life will be relatively smooth because he has neither been overprotected nor deprived. On the other hand, if the child is conceived for a specific reason, such as to hold together a shaky marriage, or to furnish companionship to a lonesome parent, or to control or punish the spouse, then he will more than likely become a tool to be manipulated at the parent's will. The child who is obviously not wanted by one or both parents will certainly reflect many adjustment problems, because of parental rejection or overprotection. Usually in the case of the "unwanted child" the parents' initial reaction to the pregnancy is one of rejection. Guilty feelings then ensue in the parents as a result of this rejection. Frequently the guilt causes parents to overreact, and what was originally rejection changes to mild acceptance and then to overwhelming acceptance. In other words, to compensate for the guilty feeling resulting from the initial rejection, parents may go to the opposite extreme and overaccept the idea of the pregnancy.

When the child is born, he is overprotected. He is overprotected because the parents must defend against the guilt for not having wanted the baby in the first place. He is often overgratified and overfed. He can't cry without being immediately pacified. He stays on the bottle too long. He is overscrubbed, overcoddled, and overstuffed. Therefore, in evaluating a child's potential for emotional stability, it is more meaningful to think in terms of a good child-parent relationship rather than in terms of the number of siblings in the family. Whether or not the child is wanted and the reasons why he is wanted are far more important to the child than the number of his brothers and sisters.

The child who is wanted is, under normal circumstances, going to have a good first year of life. His introduction to the business of living during this first year is going to help him feel that the world is a good, solid, dependable, and warm place in which to live. Because he is loved and his needs are met, all will

probably go well with him. This first year furnishes the basis on which his preschool personality is built, that is, his physical, emotional, and social development during the first six years of life. Similarly, the total personality is "laid down over," as it were, the preschool personality. Consequently, the personality adjustment patterns developed during the first year, and during the preschool years, will be reflected in later life.

Since everyone's personality consists of a variety of weaknesses and strengths, parents need not despair because upsets may have existed during the preschool years. Rather, they must evaluate the adjustment difficulties at the time they arise. Obviously, we cannot go back and remake the early years of a child's life. If the problem concerns a child who is seven years old or twelve years old, then the problem must be evaluated at that age level. When serious adjustment difficulties arise in the parent-child relationship, then appropriate steps should be taken to solve the family problem. Many times family problems are best

handled with short, but intensive, professional help, such as in a child-guidance clinic or with a child psychiatrist in private practice.

In conclusion, we asked the doctor to theorize on the reasons why, in our particular kind of society, the single-child family is looked upon with some suspicion, as if it were not doing its part or something. He said that this may come from a very complicated set of wishes. "Parents and children in all sizes of families do not always feel that they are getting all the gratification that they need. They therefore throw stones at what appears to be the ideal situation. Perhaps everyone, at one time or another, desires to be a single child whose every need is immediately gratified. These wishes are neither healthy nor realistic. They are, in fact, grossly infantile. Healthy people have a healthy respect for the abilities of other persons to plan their own lives and work them out. And this matter of health, as we have been discussing it, has relatively little to do with the number of children in a family."

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 1

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

One couple reported, after the birth of their third child, that in looking back to the time when they had only one child they thought of themselves as having been "barely married." The birth of two more children apparently intensified their feelings of being married, of being in a family. This couple looks upon other couples who have "only one child" with some suspicion, as though they were loafing.

The article focuses attention on the real and imagined differences between families with one and families with more than one child. Dr. Wren discusses these differences from the point of view of the parents involved. The attitudes of the parents to the individual child have more to do with his health than anything else. If these attitudes are good, that is, if the child is wanted, and the quality of his first year has been good, the number of his brothers and sisters does not play a very important part in his health.

In underscoring parental attitudes, Dr. Wren shows parents once more the need for insight into their own motivations and feelings toward their children. The mother who uses her child as something to help her to display her femininity probably has very little insight into what she is doing. Yet were she to gain some insight, her

relationship to her child might become immediately better.

At all points in the life of a relationship of parents and a child, Dr. Wren urges *on-the-spot* evaluation. It is never "too late." In the long run, refusal to evaluate, to examine a relationship realistically, to ask serious questions about motivation, means that we adopt superficial standards and viewpoints toward family life—for instance, its size, its financial circumstances, and its acquisitions (toys, automobile, and so on).

You probably have already realized that many of the subjects raised in the article are a bit "ticklish" for public discussion, yet if handled generally, with no pressure applied to parents, the subjects may be opened up in such a way that genuine conversation between husband and wife can go on after the session.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Considering the children you know right now, which are the most lonesome: only children or children from "multiple-sibling families"?

2. Dr. Wren suggests that unwanted children are apt to reflect many adjustment problems. What does he mean by unwanted children?

3. Evaluate the current image of the model family (2.4 children, a double garage, and an outdoor barbe-

cue). What is model about it? Using the article as a basis for evaluating, what are the important questions to be asked about this family?

4. What are the legitimate reasons for wanting more than one child?

5. What are the legitimate reasons for wanting only one child?

6. Discuss the social and economic forces that help determine a couple's idea of how many children they are going to have. Where do the ideas come from?

7. How guilty are we (as a society) in casting suspicion on the one-child family? Is this a problem in your community?

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following resources as a basis for further thought or discussion during a later meeting:

"Are You Doing Too Much for Your Child?" by L. W. Robinson, *Good Housekeeping*, Nov., 1959.

"Love Makes All the Difference," by William G. Hollister, *National Parent-Teacher*, April, 1959.

"You Can't Reason with Jealousy," by Maria M. Pelikan, *Parents' magazine*, April, 1959.

The Only Child, by Eda J. LeShan (Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 293), 25 cents. Obtain from Public Affairs Pamphlets, 22 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y. This pamphlet covers many questions that may arise from Dr. Wren's remarks. It could be used as resource for any discussion of the only child situation.

Learning to Cope with FAMILY CONFLICTS

By John Charles Wynn

 NINETEENTH-CENTURY child management (the emphasis is on the word "management") was a process of parent domination, and no fooling. In the Victorian Era, which colored all the latter years of that century, the family was regularly pictured in tintypes as a somber group surrounding the commanding figure of Father and an omniscient Mother who always knew best. . . .

Everyone secretly knew that married people quarreled, that children rebelled against their parents, that brothers and sisters squabbled. Yet the myth of the family in the tintype persisted because the rules prohibited mentioning any discord. Resentments were repressed because they were labeled as wicked feelings. Today we grin at the prudery of that day; but the reluctance to admit that there was such a thing as sex was no more characteristic of Victorianism than this notion that intrafamily conflict dare not be acknowledged. The result, we can gauge from our advantage of hindsight, was predictable: Whenever a family was actually confronted with some serious dispute, it stood in danger of breaking. How could it cope with the condition of conflict when it had never openly recognized that the conflict existed?

The Truth Will Out

The myth of the ever-placid family has been replaced by a more honest description of home life just as definitely as the tintype has been outdated by the modern motion picture that shows all three dimensions. The family is also revealed in greater depth now than then.

For one thing we candidly admit that a certain amount of hostility is to be expected in normal family relations. Benefited by a better understanding of psychology, we can even take some comfort in the turmoil of domestic bickering. It gives every one of us a chance to let off steam in the company of people who are predisposed to forgive us because they love us. This safety valve can be a valuable release for pent-up resentments that could not be expressed elsewhere.

We've learned a thing or two about this hostility. We now see that each person is capable of ambivalence, which is a psychological term for that contrary

feeling that permits two opposite emotions to be harbored at once in the same person. As the refrain of a popular song has phrased it: "Sometimes I love you, sometimes I hate you." The child who screams at his mother, "I hate you, I hate you!" may mean it, and yet love and depend upon her at precisely that same moment. Candor compels the admission that parents can lovingly detest their own children too. The realization of this possibility will smooth over many a household crisis. When Mother can take turbulent Janie into her lap and say: "I know how you feel. I can hardly stand you at times, too," something happens between them that is far more wholesome than any circumstance that would leave Mother dominating and triumphantly punishing Janie. It augurs well for both of them also in the years ahead.

The animosities of children are natural enough. We adults arouse them! For the child, his world is one big "No." Born to dependence, he begins as a helpless infant with "no language but a cry." His first frustrations come with experiencing delays in his cries for food, for warmth, or for cleanliness. But with time he will know many more. It's an adult world, and children reluctantly learn it. Even while they need the ministrations of their parents, they chafe against this dependence. Human babies are really born prematurely; it is years before they can fend for themselves. In the bird family, by contrast, is the oyster catcher whose young are scampering over the sand and grubbing for marine food a few hours after hatching.

In time, the complicated structure of family and social relations imposes yet other limits upon the child. There are rules of safety, impositions of sanitation, unreasonable demands about courtesy and co-operation. These parental assaults continue through the phases of toilet-training, table manners, schoolwork, dating rules, curfews, and permission to drive the family car. It's a hard world.

Parents have their troubles too. Long misunderstood by their children, they must still persist through the years, protecting, directing, objecting. It's hardly a popular role. Ask any parent—Father and Mother find it necessary to make a great many concessions. They soon learn that children are individuals in their own rights, and not just extensions of parental personalities. They come to see that the aggression each child expresses is a wholesome thing; but they also feel its sting. Gradually the intelligent parent comes

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to realize that he cannot indefinitely impose his own way. Nagging is a futile device; punishment is often a Pyrrhic victory.

The children meanwhile are measuring their abilities to get along in the world. To do this they must try their offensive plays—and they have many. Most of these acts are covered by the term “aggression,” a derivative from the Latin and meaning literally “pressing forward.” Aggression is essential to personality growth. It is a development of won’t-power. Without it a boy’s or girl’s future is anything but promising.

It is a curious thing that this quality of obstinacy against which parents spend so much effort and concern is a prime necessity in character growth; for unless character is fortified with a healthy stubbornness, it is flimsy stuff easily upset by a modicum of opposition.

Unlimited Friction

The home, dear institution that it is, happens to be just the place for aggression to flex its muscles. Ascribe to this fact the squabbles, the tantrums, the furies of domestic life. These are also characteristic of Christian homes and need not be any disgrace. So much is demanded of members of the family. Somehow they must patiently endure violations of privacy, conflicts of wills, demands to share, frustration of desires, clashes of counterpurposes. Yet into this area of conflict, order must be introduced and love is supposed to reign. The wonder of it is that there is as much peace as there is in our homes under such circumstances.

Aggression takes peculiar twists. Psychologists agree that the male of the species has more of it than the female: just watch the boys fight. It can be turned inward instead of outward; when it is, we label it self-control. However annoying the aggressiveness may become, it is a normal drive. The condition really to worry about is its absence. Rejoice not that a child is a “good” child, sweetly obedient and easily managed. Rather be concerned; the child who displays no aggressiveness may become a difficult problem. The smothering of this troublesome quality is neither psychologically desirable nor religiously blessed. The trick, of course, is to learn to control aggressive drives, and to devise ways of living with conflict. For this, there is no proving ground superior to the family.

One of the most dramatic parables in the whole repertoire of Jesus concerns a bitter rivalry between two brothers and their patient father’s love. Jealousy and friction between siblings (a sexless term indicating either brother or sister) are universal in the world of time and space. That theme is treated in classical mythology, explored in psychology, developed in literature, and practiced in numberless families. The Japanese sum it up in a cryptic proverb: “My brother, a stranger.”

Every child sometimes feels the smarting sensation

of jealousy. If he’s the eldest, the arrival of a new baby is the occasion for behavior problems and feelings of baffling insecurity. If he’s the youngest, he sees the older children with privileges thus far denied to him and whimpers that they get all the breaks. If he’s somewhere between, he’s likely to feel that he’s caught in the middle between older siblings who are allowed more freedom and the younger “who gets away with everything.” . . .

This could be serious. It is possible for brother and sister conflicts to last a lifetime. The opportunity for nipping them in the bud is while the children are young. Parents can make careful preparations for the new baby, orienting an older child gradually to the idea. Each child can be helped to find his own place, quite independent of the attainments of another child in other fields. Susie may be graceful in ballet dancing; but Sandra can find her forte in dramatics. Wise parents will often show each child some individual attention, assuring him of love and security. They will not charge older children with the task of constantly caring for younger members of the family. They will accept jealousy as a normal thing, not forcing the jealous child to feel guilty also, but helping him to overcome his jealousy . . .

There are worse things than a hot display of jealousy. A youngster could suppress these feelings, driving his bitterness down deep inside him in order to seek parental favor. But they may also crop out again many years later, paying back the original emotion with compound interest.

Jealousy is an insidious emotion, breaking up families and damaging the love relationship. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the problem is limited to children. Adults are also deeply involved. The young father who resents all the time and attention his wife gives the baby is exhibiting jealousy. The hostility between husband and wife, so common among family problems, is related to jealousy. Family friction knows no age limits, follows no logic.

Keep It Friendly

One well-known study on child care found on the bookshelves of countless homes has come to be dubbed “the consolation book.” To it desperate parents have turned again and again only to learn that their children’s outrageous behavior just happens to be normal at that age. We find comfort in learning that numerous other families have been over this territory before and that they lived through it. A familiarity with the characteristics of a particular age aids us in knowing what to expect and prepares us to be patient with the foibles of, say, a five-year-old. Such knowledge may guard us against expecting too much.

Unconditional obedience is a response that probably comes only from a fear-ridden coward in the face of an absolute dictator. Instances are fortunately rare in which this situation is found between children and parents. Problems of obedience are frequent and

often upsetting. Ways are known, however, to reduce these problems to a lesser frequency.

For one thing, parents can refrain from making unnecessary demands on their children. They can ration their commands to include only those matters which are essential; then obedience in these can be expected. To force continual demands upon the youngsters is to risk an increase in disobedience even in the face of the most serious and essential matters. When it is advisable to issue commands, there are approved ways of doing it. Control your tone of voice. Keep it friendly; if you don't, it is possible to earn compliance and resentment at the same time. Give reasons for your commands. A child who understands is likely to be more co-operative. Make allowances for individual differences. The young person may have limitations or ideas of his own for which it is reasonable to expect tolerance. Anyway, the perfectionist parent makes life miserable for those around him. . . .

When differences occur at home, there are proved ways of handling them. One way (and this is not faceious) is to ignore them. Many a quarrel between family members is of such insignificant nature that there is true wisdom in letting them "fight it out." To intervene in every instance of bickering is likely to shut off some wholesome expression of hostility and may work an injustice in the bargain.

Another way that enjoys sanctity of time-honored practice is the talk-it-over session. In the family council it is possible to get off one's chest the complaints that one feels, and also to take everyone into the planning process for family decisions. This step alone prevents untold dissention. It may even stop the plaintive, "No one ever consults me about anything."

"A word fitly spoken," says the writer of The Proverbs, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Certainly a word of encouragement can be an extremely valuable thing. Praise carries the weight of ten scoldings. It brings a grateful response that far exceeds any value a criticism might evoke. A few years back, the Western Electric Company conducted a series of experiments in employee relations to learn how best to increase efficiency. Although they tried refreshments, rest periods, entertainment, and other favors, they found that the highest degree of efficiency came *in response to encouragement*. It works in households too.

Whistle While You Work

Disagreement can be aroused easily in families; but you can find it still faster by assigning a work detail. Complaints from sister that she must do more than anyone else are offset by groans from brother that he never gets to do anything but work.

Parents will find that the members of the family are more disposed to whistle while they work if a few basic principles are adopted:

1. Adults must set the working example. Lazy children just might be chips off the old block.

2. Let each person have some choice in what he would like to do. There are limits to the choices, of course. But most of us are happier in our tasks when they are self-assigned.

3. Don't overwork the youngsters. This one is tricky because it is difficult to establish the golden mean between indolence and compulsory servitude.

4. Accentuate the positive side of work. Show how it serves the family. When scheduling the jobs, put it this way: "Today we will mow the lawn and clean the basement. Where would you rather work?"

5. Be specific about the job but allow wide leeway in how it gets done. This makes the worker responsible for completing the work in his own way

Learning to love work is a slow process, and most of us never quite attain this goal. Sharing in the duties of the household, however, is a step in the right direction. Washing the dishes or polishing the car can be just as dull for young people as for adults. But the youngsters have a valuable lesson when they realize this fact. Their willingness to help in household responsibilities is increased when they feel that they have a real stake in the family, when they know their efforts will be noticed and appreciated, and when they recognize that others in the family are also pulling their share of the load.

From Father's first surprised look at his wrinkled infant to the day that his grandchildren are brought home for a visit, the youngsters seem never to be quite what he had expected. Years of training are spent in trying to change these children of ours into something better. In this exacting task most parents do a respectable job, but they are bound to feel the heavy hand of failure somewhere along the line.

Mistakes are rife in this business of family living. "It doesn't need a war to flatten things," says a character in a novel by Graham Greene. ". . . Parents . . . are just as good as war." It is sobering to realize how much damage parents can do. Until rather recently, however, there has been too much emphasis on this danger. Inevitably, parents have been made to feel demoralized and guilty; and the churches have at times increased this sense of guilt among Christian families. But most fathers and mothers conscientiously rear their families. They need guidance more than they need criticism.

In the process of child training, parents learn a lot themselves. They come to see that co-operation is a two-way street, that generosity and honest attempts at understanding are astonishingly practical in family relations, and that counseling and earnest talks are best received if given in terms of love.

Quarrels are normal in every household. Hostility and aggression find expression in every individual. Exasperating tensions are found "in the best of families." The solution lies not in trying to erase every one of these all-too-natural feelings, but in learning to cope with them. In this program, there is just no substitute for Christian love.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 2

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

This article deals realistically with the facts of life in the twentieth-century home. In contrast to the beliefs of parents in Victorian days, Mr. Wynn believes that modern parents can face the facts and look at problems instead of ignoring them or sweeping them under the rug. In the spirit of candor that he hopes modern parents will employ in thinking about their home life, Mr. Wynn focuses attention on resentment, hostility, aggression, and jealousy. The article then goes on to point out the *inevitable* presence of these forces in the home. He thus suggests that parents should not try to get rid of the problems but, rather, should find satisfactory ways to cope with them.

Some parents in your group may feel that these are problems that must be solved. Jealousy is incompatible with love, they may argue. Or they may contend that resentment has no place in a Christian home. Other parents may be attempting to ignore the problems with the "everybody does it, so it's all right," argument. A careful reading of the article shows that the author has proposed a possible way of looking at problems that in the long run will prove far more satisfactory and healthy. He wants parents "to cope" with problems, that is, deal with them when they come up, meet them with understanding, work through them rather than around them. This is

the essential point of the article: in "coping" with immediate problems as they come up, parents do not give many little problems a chance to snowball into big and often unmanageable problems.

According to the author, "love" must be the basis and atmosphere of the family. In love parents can cope with their problems because they have the basic desire to give to the other, to see his point of view, to understand what's going on. Love is not a magical substance but, rather, a fundamental trust held by every member of the family, a trust that expresses itself in willingness to give. The discussion of the group might consider in more detail the concrete ways in which members have found the author's final sentence to be true.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As you consider the author's discussion of resentment, hostility, aggression, and jealousy, which of these problems impressed you as being most important? Why?
2. The author suggests in many different ways that having problems and being Christian are not mutually exclusive. Can you think of situations in which his position would not be completely right?
3. The article makes this point: "The home . . . happens to be just the place for aggression to flex its muscles." Many weary parents may find times when they don't agree with this.

How aggressive should they be in "quieting" things down?

4. Consider the five guides to dealing with work in the home. Which of these have you found does work? doesn't work? Do you find conflicts between what the author suggests here and what he says in other places about animosity, resentment, and so on? Can you think of times when a child (or parent) shouldn't work?

5. The author makes a distinction between trying to solve problems and "coping" with them? What exactly is the distinction?

6. The last sentence of the article contains the words "Christian love." Can you suggest synonyms for these words? Why does the author place such a high value on Christian love? Can you be sure that you have it?

7. Some people say that parents need relieving and relaxing words more than they need guidance, as Mr. Wynn suggests. With whom do you agree? Why?

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following resources as a basis for further thought or discussion during a later meeting:

"Love Makes All the Difference," by William G. Hollister, *National Parent-Teacher*, April, 1959.

"Parents Can Keep Children's Unconscious Rivalry Within Bounds," by Benjamin McL. Spock, *Ladies' Home Journal*, April, 1959.

"The Right Way to Bring Up Children," Interviews with Benjamin McL. Spock and James Roswell Gallagher, *U. S. News and World Report*, July 6, 1959.

"Topartedness"

By Edwin T. Randall

 DURING the days of the famed Alaskan gold rush, three men had been traveling for days across the frozen Yukon territory without seeing any sign of human life. Suddenly they came upon a crude cabin half hidden in the snow. The old "sourdough" who inhabited it was not in the least glad to see visitors, other human beings, people he could talk to. On the contrary, he started preparing to leave as soon as they arrived. "Why?" the three visitors asked.

"There was a big crowd just like this stopped by here a week or so ago," he answered. "There's just

gettin' too many people around here for a man with any independence of spirit."

Whether fact or fancy, the story of the sourdough brings into sharp focus one of the haunting problems of modern life. Unlike the sourdough, the overwhelming majority of Americans today live their lives in public. The sourdough enjoyed being alone, whereas the modern individual thinks that being alone is a hardship. Unlimited privacy is a chore to be avoided

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if possible and painfully endured if necessary. According to the standards developed by our society, the sourdough would have to be called a sick man whose sickness consisted of his unwillingness to share public life. He couldn't stand togetherness.

Perhaps that particular sourdough was sick. But his point of view toward life cannot be dismissed so easily as he can be called "antisocial." His point of view places a premium on privacy and perceives dangers in public life—in togetherness. His point of view should at least awaken in us some desire to look at our unlimited public togetherness.

No Place to Hide

1. *Apartment House.* A young mother invites friends to her apartment, which is one of six in a new, aggressively up-to-date building. The hostess and her friends carry on a full, intimate, fast conversation. One of the visitors walks into the bathroom just as she asks a question. And she gets an answer from the next-door apartment! Apparently the party next door had been monitoring the proceedings and was too engrossed to realize that she had no business breaking into the conversation. In fact, she had no business listening at all. But that apartment house had been constructed in such a way that neighbors cannot stay out of one another's business. Privacy was ruled out on the drawing board.

2. *Doorless Dwellings.* Most of the people, however, live in detached dwellings and not in apartment buildings. In these detached dwellings, that is, single houses placed on individual lots to insure space between houses, privacy is easier to maintain. It would seem that way, at least. Closer inspection of these houses, however, shows that privacy is hard to find.

The modern house particularly has virtually no doors. The rooms are called areas. What goes on in the dining area interferes with what goes on in the living area. The sleeping area—a row or cluster of bedrooms—is for sleeping. A play area and cooking area are generally adjacent so that a parent may look after the children at play. The garage is in the floor plan of the house. Few doors separate the areas. These houses have few places where individual family members can be alone. And the desire to be alone is too often spoiled by parents who send their children to a lonely room as *punishment*.

3. *Instrumentation.* Modern life has been scored for full instrumentation. Television can be counted on as an able companion in case no other people are around. If not the TV set, then the telephone will do. A teen-ager need not spend his few moments alone. He can phone a pal and have that pal as near to him as the telephone receiver can be placed to the ear. The radio, or phonograph, fills up dead-air space with words or music so that just one person in that air space does not feel so absolutely alone. Quietness can be shattering to nerves that are accustomed to constant noise. Our modern civilization has furnished

us, therefore, with a high standard of noisiness in order to create the illusion that no one need ever be alone.

4. *Rifled Correspondence.* Family mail is quickly becoming family property. The sixteen-year-old son cannot depend on private mail. His parents may open his mail before he gets home from school. Their motives are good. They are overseeing their son's life to make sure that he ally himself with no mischief or order things by mail that he should not have. But the son in question comes to feel that he has no life of his own because nothing is private—his desk, his bureau, his schedule, his wallet, and now his mail. The love-lorn columns in newspapers regularly carry urgent letters from teen-agers who don't know what to make of parents who rifle personal mail. The advice they get from the columnists offers little help, because the parents are the ones who need the help. And—the individual parent cannot feel even reasonably sure that letters addressed to him will arrive in his hands unopened.

5. *Fun Together.* Families have been sold a bill of goods by a whole network of interests that stand to gain from family fun. The television set at the center of a home represents *income* to every sponsor who provides programs for the family to see. Magazines and newspapers join ranks with the television industry to picture through advertisement, article, and program the family as a solid unit that is *always together* and *always having fun*. Whatever could families be doing all the time that is so much fun? Being amused or entertained, or sold. Of what does the fun consist? Being together. The circle thus is both endless and vicious. Families that have fallen into the circle are victims of a complicated plot and may actually, by now, be incapable of escaping.

Lovely Solitude

Students of contemporary life find that sociability is not 100 per cent pure evil. They point with accuracy to the positive features of families being together. The praises of togetherness, however, are sung in many different ways and by many different voices (some of which, as we have suggested, stand to gain by the arrangement).

Against this chorus of praise, some criticism also needs to be sounded. Unlimited sociability restricts the individual's rights to be by himself. He not only has personal rights to privacy, he also has acute personal needs in this matter. What possibly can the individual contribute to the family if he is never alone?

Families grow strong together when each member of the family has a personal life that is respected, provided for, and encouraged. Stories read, pictures painted, songs learned, ideas created in privacy, can contribute to the life of the family. But unless the family provides time and space for solitude, the stories are not read nor the songs learned nor the pictures painted.

Children, like their parents, need dreaming space. They need to enjoy and respect themselves. They need time to do nothing except *be* by themselves. Having learned the fine art of solitude, they can become members of and contributors to the many societies of which they are naturally parts. They go out of these societies in order to have something to give when they get back. A harassed and sorry life that does not allow them to go off by themselves or that penalizes them

for going off (with the tag "antisocial") cannot sustain itself long, for it is surely and certainly killing off its one source of strength.

A small boy who confused his words could not straighten out the difference between "to pieces" and "apart." He thus came to his father with a dismantled toy and said, "Look, Daddy, it's all toparted." That's precisely the word for it; topartedness. We have to be topart in order ever really to be together.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 3

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

This article focuses on an analysis of the public quality of modern life in order to suggest the real virtues of privacy. In discussing the article, neither the analysis nor the suggestions should be slighted. Mr. Randall notes, in his analysis, that the forms of modern social life conspire against privacy. Our dwellings, our style of life, our attitudes, rule out creative solitude. You probably will find most members of your group agreeing with this analysis. They may not, however, agree with Mr. Randall's further analysis that the person who does go off by himself is termed "antisocial" and "sick." They may argue that we do give room to the person who wants to be alone and do not brand him as "sick." Perhaps the members of your group who disagree with Mr. Randall are parents who do allow and may even encourage each member of their families to enjoy creative solitude. But wouldn't they have to be the first to admit that they are exceptions? For the most part, Mr. Randall's analysis is accurate. As a culture, that is, as a society of families that, to some extent, get their values from togetherness—oriented neighbors, community leaders, television, and so on—we fear rather than sanction privacy.

There is some point in saying that a person who goes off from his society (a family society or society at large) is antisocial. The artist, the thinker, the creative workman—any creative person—must, for a time, leave society. But the intent of the departure from society is not to be antisocial. The creative person leaves society in order to return to it eventually. The basic meaning of his apparently antisocial behavior is found in the contribution he later makes. This is true for a five-year-old child in exactly the

same way that it is true for a playwright. The playwright gives a creative work to the society from which he has isolated himself. The five-year-old who sits at his window and dreams for a half hour returns to his family society with perhaps no more than a smile, but probably with a new insight or certainly with some newly puzzling questions. He, too, makes his contribution.

Mr. Randall, thus, is not saying that creative solitude is actually antisocial; it appears momentarily to be antisocial. And his assertions do not deny the realities of genuine antisocial behavior on the part of people who do isolate themselves from society, who make no attempt to contribute to society, who, as a matter of fact, destroy social structures. These are sick people, and they should not be confused with others who want to be alone so that they can be better people when together with others.

This sentence seems to be the heart of the article: "A harassed and sorry life that does not allow [children] to go off by themselves or that penalizes them for going off (with the tag 'antisocial') cannot sustain itself long, for it is surely and certainly killing off its one source of strength." If parents were to take this sentence to heart, then they should probably have to change their ideas and their basic patterns of living. Not much in the way of guidance can be given them in how to change, but in group discussion they can be encouraged to change. And it should be pointed out that granting the privileges of privacy to children cannot mean very much unless these same privileges are granted by the parents to each other!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How many places in your house invite privacy? Would you have more

doors between rooms in your house if you could?

2. Some parents look at their children's mail in order to protect them from harm. Which is more important: Keeping mail private, or granting parental protection from smut, lewd pictures, exploitative business arrangements, and the like?

3. Can you suggest values in togetherness that Mr. Randall has missed?

4. What do you think of in your family as family fun? Evaluate the author's assertion that much family fun is an endless and vicious circle. What does he mean in making this assertion?

5. How much time do you as a parent have to spend in "lovely solitude"—away from the children and your spouse?

6. What realistic steps might be taken in your home, school, church, and community to change the togetherness, no-place-to-be-alone pattern of life? Should they be taken? How would you begin?

7. Do your children prefer play groups or solitary play? Which play activity do you encourage? Why do you encourage this?

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following as resources for further thought or discussion at a later meeting:

"Under One Roof," an article by Bonaro W. Overstreet. This appears in the July–September, 1960, issue of *Growing*.

The Lonely Crowd and *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered*, both by David Riesman (Doubleday Anchor Books; each, 95 cents). Chapters VI and VII in *The Lonely Crowd*, and Section II, articles 1-6, in *Individualism Reconsidered*, furnish a much more extensive evaluation of the features of modern life that Mr. Randall has discussed.

"Too Much Together," by M. L. Lane, *Parents'* magazine, February, 1959.

The Church Has a Steeple

By Stephen B. Rybolt

 CHILDREN do say funny things. Art Linkletter made us aware of a fact that we already were painfully acquainted with. Our own children, neighbors' children, and just "children in general" are unusually candid and for that reason often funny. What makes us acutely aware of all this is simply the realization that the children often "pull off" funny sayings that are repetitions of stray remarks we have made in unguarded moments—and in different contexts. Children don't always say *embarrassing* things, but, more often than not, we are most aware of what they pick up from us when it embarrasses us. Children are just like sponges. They absorb ideas and thoughts, the patterns of their parents' behavior, their attitudes, mannerisms, and beliefs. These ideas, language characteristics, and attitudes, as well as beliefs, are expressed in their lives through actions and words. And that is a sobering thought.

Basic patterns of behavior and belief are pretty well established by the time a child enters public school. No matter how often experts point out this "fact of our lives," parents are a little shocked. They desire a little more room, a few more years, and certainly want to give some of that responsibility to someone else. But the fact does not change. Through conscious imitation and unconscious observation, the child becomes his parents' child in word, deed, and attitude. That includes, of course, the parents' ideas of the Christian faith and their image of the church. The child "knows" about the church before he ever enters its doors.

A recent casual survey I have made indicates that we have conveyed "images" of our faith that will have to be changed sooner than we expect or are ready to consider. In a good many situations the church the child enters is not the church that the child thought he was going to enter. Let me give you a few of the "images" that parents are conveying to their children. These are attitudes and teachings which are conveyed by words and by attitudes and determine the child's conception of the church.

The Image of the Church as "the Place Where Not To"

The teacher had begun her lesson when one of her outspoken students bravely commented, "Oh, I don't believe this God stuff!" Sitting next to him was a pretty, prissy, little girl. She was quick to answer, and, I imagine, quite properly and convincingly to

the boy, helped by a kick in the shins, "We don't talk like that in Sunday school." We could easily center on the remark by the boy, who obviously was repeating a statement his father had made—perhaps on the fourth night in a row that his wife was scheduled to go to a church function. At any rate, the father had delivered his message and the boy had heard it and now was himself delivering it. The image the boy was expressing is not an uncommon one: "You have to prove it to me before I'll believe it."

The little girl also had an image of the church. Somewhere along the line she had received the idea that the church is concerned with what *not* to do. This is negativism in embryo. Here's where the idea gets started that Christianity is a set of rules—"You don't do this and that." There is a certain limitation to what we are free to express and share with one another if we are to "do it the right way."

The girl's teacher agreed with her, and this gives point to the suspicion that this image is one of the most serious alive today in the "fellowship of the forgiven." Our church life becomes characterized by what we do not rather than by what we do. To those outside the fellowship, we must appear to be setting some rather strange requirements that do not seem to be altogether in accord with the Lord of the church. Pharisaism is not at all a dead issue within Christianity. It rears its ugly head whenever the freedom to be oneself with one's questions, doubts, and concerns is stifled in favor of the "proper" expression.

The negative image has further ramifications. It easily leads to a double standard. We don't do and say things in the church that we feel perfectly comfortable about doing or saying outside the church. Thus we begin to catalog and divide ourselves into areas, some of which are subject to Christian rules and others of which are conveniently out of reach of those same rules. The rules are bad enough, but to obey them only some of the time is worse. It is not necessary to labor this point: "Religion and politics do not mix," and "Business is business," are illustrative of the kind of split-up life that results from this image of the church.

The Image of the Church as "the Place"

There's a little game that the kindergarten child learns to play with his hands. "Here is the church, there is the steeple, open the door, and see all the people." If you ask most primary children to draw the church, you'll get the same effect, but with more style and color. We have given our children the image that the church is "a place," or "the place." Not un-

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commonly, that "place" has the almost exact appearance of our building of worship, education, and fellowship, with steeple and all. This becomes the place where the praying goes on, where one is expected to have that particular "spiritual" feeling and experience. It just doesn't seem like church unless the windows within the sanctuary are stained glass or, for the newer churches built during the "return to religion movement," the modern functional furnishings are evident.

Christmas cards showing a snow-covered church (with steeple) seem to reinforce the image. The child comes to think of the church as an old-fashioned part of life that is cherished along with Valley Forge and Admiral Dewey as a nice element of American life. His parents help him to locate the church in a building, but then they go on to help him see that it doesn't mean very much one way or the other.

When we convey this image to our children and others' children, we are contradicting the New Testament teachings of "the church in your home," "the body of Christ" and "gathered in the name of Christ." We are really confusing the issue at best and are failing to consider the dynamic nature of the Kingdom "in, but not of, the world."

The Image of the Church as "Reverend So and So's"

Pastors are particularly sensitive to the all-too-common image that well-meaning and beloved parishioners bequeath to their children. Have you said, just recently, "This is Dr. Smith's church," or whatever your minister's name happens to be? Well, *is it*, really? Do you mean that you are quite willing to let the minister or ministers (if they would accept it) assume this role? Maybe we are all too accustomed to think in this way. We have not given too much thought to the fact that we are personally involved; it is nice to have the pastor as a church-in-one. But if the church is anyone's concern, it is ours.

Look more closely at this image for what it implies, and then decide whether you are willing to allow such an image to continue its life. By our statements we are confusing the nature of *the* church with the nature of *a* church. But the church is not a club, supervised by a benevolent Dr. Smith. The church is people—disciples, witnesses to the Christ. They are the people of God, they and their children. So we are the church, if we are his disciples. The actual property that serves as an instrument for discipleship belongs to all those who, at any one moment, are seeking to express their witness in and through the particular fellowship of believers. We hold the property only in "trusteeship"—there is an intangible something about this property that can never be pinned down, but that somehow is always being conveyed to others. Even the decisions of how we can best minister to our communities of influence around us and beyond us is not a matter of one person's will and determination. The very energies that we can collectively express through our

groups and representatives constitute the most important single refutation of the image that the church belongs to the pastor.

We simply must come to grips with what it means to minister, to be disciples. Every Christian person is, as far as Biblical Christianity is concerned, a minister to his neighbor. To be a Christian is to be a minister.

The Image of the Church as "Organized Confusion"

Everyone who has ever had to do any kind of organizational work within the church knows that one of the persistent sore spots is our tendency to lose sight of ministering. We get so many committees that we have to organize committees to check up on the committees that are not committing. "I'm too busy"; "I've already got several other jobs"; "Let someone else do it"; "I have to have some time to spend with my family"; "I have other responsibilities"—these rather frequently heard statements reflect an image of the church. The church is the place where too many people meet in too many meetings, with seldom any inkling of why they are there anyway.

What do children think of when they witness a domestic scene of this nature? Time: 6:54, Wednesday evening. The father has just come through the front door. He begins to take off his coat while children are clamoring for a kiss or a ride or have something important to tell him about a turtle or arithmetic. His wife moves into the scene at a brisk pace. She gives him a perfunctory kiss and this message: "Bob just called to say that the meeting has to be tonight and at 7:15." She then kisses him again, "Good night, dear, I'll see you in the morning," and hands him a sandwich to eat on his way to the church.

No wonder that our children picture the church as "organized confusion." Not only are these folks not sure what's happening, but they seem to find little satisfaction in what they do. (I am wondering if many committee meetings aren't really just reasons to get people together to find out what they're not doing and to try to get them to do what they said they would do.) I see no available exit to take, either to come to the solution of the problem or to the expression of our resultant frustrations. We cannot forget that our attitude is being "taken in" and believed by those who themselves are caught up in our organizational life.

Perhaps we can detect ourselves and our expressed and implied ideas and thoughts, our words and actions, as they are being mirrored in the lives of our children and the children of our friends. The church may be organized confusion, and it may have a steeple. Somehow we can't get away from how local the church always is. But as parents we can and must add depth to the image, so that our children will see and understand with their hearts that the church is the people of God, ministers of and witnesses to the good news.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 4

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

Were we to evaluate the public American image of the church by looking at calendar art, post cards, and Christmas cards, and listening to general platitudinous statements about the church, the church would be white and situated on a village square. It would have a steeple. Well-dressed people would be going to or coming from a happy service in it; snow would be on the ground surrounding it. Not many churches actually correspond to this public image, yet the image is remarkably virile.

In a somewhat similar way we, as parents, have images of the church that may not have much reference to the church—as it really is. Yet we have these images and, furthermore, we transmit them to our children. The children learn to think of the church in the way that we parents think of it. What the children see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts when they participate in the affairs of the church and go to the church building is often at odds with the images that have been learned from parents. This is a conflict situation of some major importance for children. For this reason, discussion among parents of their images of the church is pertinent and may prove helpful.

Mr. Rybolt defines four representative images of the church. Perhaps no parents in your group have any of these images exactly as Mr. Rybolt has described them. But the images of the church held by the parents are apt to fall into one of these general types. Therefore the discussion might focus

itself on the images held by the parents in the group rather than on the images that Mr. Rybolt describes. His can be used as starting places for the discussion, but the discussion will be virtually useless unless specific attention is eventually given to what's going on in the lives of the parents in your group.

It might be necessary at the beginning of the discussion to define pretty carefully the way in which the word "image" is being used in the article. "Image" means "a mental picture." Most people, when they hear the word "church" or think about "the church" have some picture that comes into their thoughts. Other people do not have these mental pictures, but have definite feelings that seem to be evoked at the mention of the word "church." And people with neither pictures nor feelings that are definitely associated with the word "church"—if they are in the church—act out in their lives certain basic attitudes toward the church. We might call this acting out, feeling, or picture called forth by the word "church," our "image" of the church.

You might think of this session as a time when parents may reflect together and thus gain (1) some insight into their own images of the church and (2) some curiosity about how their children really (in their heart of hearts) feel about the church.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the main picture or feeling that comes to your mind when you hear the word "church"? Where does it come from? Has it changed

significantly since your childhood days?

2. The little girl and boy in the church school class, who were mentioned in the article, were "acting out" their images of the church. What are your children's images of the church? Do these images bear any resemblance to your own?

3. Of the four typical images described in the article, which one seems most typical? least typical? Why?

4. The author contends that the church is undeniably local. We experience it in local places and in personal ways. How can we, as the author suggests, add depth to this local image? Can a person, for instance, have an image of a world-wide church? How?

5. When a child learns to look at the church in a way that contradicts his parents' image of the church, what should the parents do? What should the church do?

6. Which of the images described in the article seems to you most destructive and farthest from the New Testament image of the church?

7. What image, according to Mr. Rybolt, *should* be our image of the church?

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following resources as bases for further thought or for discussion at a later meeting on the same subject:

"Communicating Our Faith to Our Children," by William C. Schram, is a helpful article that appears in the July–September, 1960, *Growing*.

"Holidays for Teaching," by Iris V. Cully, an article in the October–December, 1960, issue of *Discovery*, provides some useful guidance in teaching children to be aware of the church as the people of God.

The Old (New?) Family Pew

By D. Evor Roberts



THE new minister, installed but a few weeks before, looked down at the faces beginning to be somewhat familiar, and noted the familiarity he had seen in the third pew from the front every Sunday since his arrival: father, mother, and three boys who were scrubbed, combed, and pressed, and

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surprisingly attentive. The church school was in session at the other end of the building. "Why aren't those boys in the classes where they belong?" the minister asked himself. When the weeks extended into months, and the unbroken family was still there, absent only during rare illnesses or trips, he began to realize they were there because the parents wanted it that way. Several interesting conversations took

place between the minister and the parents, with any pastoral remarks on behalf of the church school coming off second best in favor of that family's unalterable conviction that nothing could be more important than the weekly experience of worshiping together.

The Family Pew Is Old

Peculiarly, a subject or a practice considered in church history to be as extinct as the dodo (*Didus ineptus*—it had a massive, clumsy body and small wings, useless for flight) has a strange way of reviving and sprouting new and better wings for a surprising new flight in the contemporary church. Such a practice is represented by the growing desire of parents to engage in corporate worship with their children in the pew beside them. This it not something new. It is old, very old, just about as old as the Philipian jailer who was baptized by Paul “with all his family” and “rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God” (*Acts 16: 33-34*).

All of us have heard the pathetic voice of the post-middle-age secularist, still fighting his hoary teen-age battle: “I don’t go to church because my father and mother made me go with them, morning and evening, when I was a boy. I got all my religion before I was eighteen.” Indeed he did, and more’s the pity. The fault lay, not with the practice but with the attitude instilled toward the practice—the legalistic, do-your-religious-duty-and-the-more-it-hurts-the-more-merit-in-heaven attitude; and the fault lay too with a type of worship and church program guaranteed to raise up rebels, and with innumerable Sabbatarian restrictions (church twice a Sunday *plus* no fun in the afternoon).

But we have about come to the point in the century when this mossy complaint can be consigned to the archives, for the “liberation” from the church that followed the Great Rebellion has obviously produced a whole series of anemic notions, i.e., Christian education as “something for the children,” separate from worship; the worshiping church as an adult activity, separate from the “Sunday school.” Everywhere and in every way in our society, the family is splintered, and nowhere more than in the church (that stronghold of domestic mores) is it more completely or more tragically splintered. No wonder that the new minister, looking at that nonconformist family, was given something to ponder!

Perhaps it will help to set our subject in a good Presbyterian theological context. *Theological Proposition One*: “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever” (The Larger Catechism)—ergo, we are fulfilled only in acts of worship. *Proposition Two*: “Male and female he created them” (The Holy Bible)—ergo, the family is written into the Planner’s blueprint. *Conclusion from Propositions One and Two*: The family is fulfilled only in worship. *Proposition Three*: “Dearly beloved, the sacrament of Baptism is of divine ordinance. God our

Father, who has redeemed us by the sacrifice of Christ, is also the God and Father of our children. They belong, with us who believe, to the membership of the church through the covenant made in Christ, and confirmed to us by God in this sacrament” (*The Book of Common Worship*¹). (You heard these words not so long ago, if the babies didn’t drown out the minister’s voice.) *Result*: Our children are *church members* too, even before confirmation. (“Confirmation” means what it says: the mature child *confirms* his discipleship to Christ by personal decision—he isn’t a “new church member”; he *has been* a member since his baptismal day. Did you know that in Presbyterian practice, when a husband and wife change their church membership, the Letter of Transfer includes *the names of their baptized children*? They are unconfirmed members of the church.) *Grand Total Conclusion from the Aforegoing*: *Parents-with-their-children are the church*, the worshiping community.

There was a day when this was understood and expressed in practice. It is more than coincidental that that was also the day, unlike our own, when Christians were theologically literate. Let’s take a look at the Pilgrim families of Plymouth Colony, and for the moment set aside, if we can, the bias of current educational psychology. Bradford Smith, in *Bradford of Plymouth*, a biography of William Bradford, gives this description of the Pilgrims’ church life in Holland, before their famous trip:²

“It was in the meeting room of the building they had bought for their pastor’s home and their church that they experienced to the fullest their oneness as a people united in faith. On Thursday evenings and for the greater part of Sunday they were together. . . . No one in those days thought of providing more digestible religious fare for children than the services lasting four hours or more which their parents attended. No one thought to make allowances for youth and immaturity. Though we would consider such treatment cruelly inappropriate nowadays, there is no evidence that the young were permanently harmed by it, or that Pilgrim children grew up to be maladjusted half as often as our own offspring. Under such a pastor as Robinson they were put in touch with a wide range of information, speculation, and logical argument. Though much of what he said would have been incomprehensible to the youngest, they could not have failed to be impressed by the respect and attention their parents paid to his words. Curiosity would thus be followed by the effort to understand, so that in time every Pilgrim child must have become a precocious storehouse of adult ideas about man, God, and the universe. As a method of education it may have been, though somewhat rigorous, far more effective than anything we have today. It directed their minds

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² Copyright, 1951, by Bradford Smith. Used by permission of J. B. Lippincott Company.

toward conduct rather than toward the acquisition of skills or facts. It was aimed at the making of moral men rather than economic men—an aim therefore far higher than that of the schools in a primarily acquisitive society. For whatever criticism our time may cast at the Pilgrims, we cannot measure up to them in the purposeful shaping of our institutions toward moral goals."

Remedies for a Sorry Situation

History aside, what about today? We can't blithely ignore all the insights we have gained in our time concerning the methods of educating children, be it reading, science, or the ways of worship and the Christian faith. But we can surely *recognize* the problems of our society: the splintered family and the *frightening number of children growing up within the churches who do not know what the church is or what the gospel is, or have much prospect, under present procedures, of ever finding out*. As a matter of fact, the latter problem has been so long in existence that now the church is largely a social cult, not the self-aware body of Christ.

How did this happen? Examine the typical church today. It is departmentalized to within an inch of its life (a metaphor too literally true for comfort). Adults worship, children are taught (well, they do learn to color nicely)—and never the twain shall meet, except on special Sundays when we suffer the little children briefly to come unto us in the sanctuary—in church school groups of course (the species must be isolated and KEPT QUIET), there to be told a nice little story while parents and grandparents beam. Do we justify this by saying, "See, we do give the children an opportunity to worship with us, and of course their main experience of worship is in the church school"? But the average child in the average church frequently does not experience the reality of worship in the church school, and even when and if he does, it is *not* with his parents. That is the whole point. Concerning this deepest level of human life, they have nothing to talk about, they have shared nothing.

A remedy? Well, here and there churches are experimenting. As a beginning, one church, in which the church school was disbanded for the summer, planned a single forty-five-minute service at 9:30 A.M., with a simplified order of worship and a briefer sermon (there was no "children's story"). It was an adult sermon basically, but the minister made an effort in at least a part of it to speak directly and meaningfully to the *younger members of the church*. This was a family service.

Another church has completely revamped its program. This takes courage, a great deal of planning, and adequate facilities. In this church all the adults and children of *all ages* can come at one time on Sunday morning and leave at one time. During a two or two and one-half hour period, something valuable is going on for every individual: families worship to-

gether as families, then adults study together, children study together, toddlers are kept happy, and even diapers are changed in the "Baby-fold."

Many churches have not experimented at all. But family needs are no less real, and there is simply the crying need of fathers and mothers and their reasonably wiggleless children (age 7 would be a good beginning) to occupy a family pew together. When this happens, a family does strongly feel, each member in his own way, its unity under God. An awareness comes of God's love and acceptance as the great source of their love and acceptance of one another in the home. Never mind that the child doesn't have an intellectual understanding of *all* the Elizabethan words of our prayers. By the general character of the language, by the minister's voice, he can get the *drift* of a prayer of adoration (the greatness and wonder of God); of a prayer of confession (I am sorry that I have done wrong, and I notice that Mommy and Daddy are saying they are sorry too; it reminds me of the time Mommy got mad and spanked me hard for something I didn't do at all, and then she found out that I hadn't done it and cried and asked me to forgive her, and of course, I forgave her, and how we loved each other then; I guess we all do things wrong all the time, but now I hear the minister saying that God forgives us, and isn't that wonderful?). A child knows that a prayer of thanksgiving says "thank you," etc.

The elements of worship are many, and in some way each is applicable to the child—the reading of Scripture, the dedication of a family's offering or tithe, even the sermon. As for the latter, we underestimate the ability of a child to catch the drift and understand much of the content of many an adult sermon. Ask your minister for his favorite story of the child who heard, remembered, and recapitulated everything he said, while many an older person in the congregation succumbed to wanderings of mind! It is conceivable that like the Pilgrims' children, a modern child, consistently on hand for public worship and the sermon every seventh day, might end up actually *learning* more there about life, the Bible, the good news of Jesus Christ, than he was currently learning in the classes and activities of the church school. And when one considers that he and his parents are both listening to the same things at the same time (both the read Word and the interpreted Word in the sermon) and can therefore *talk* about these things afterward, who can say where the limits would be to such religious nurture, fostered under these circumstances by a *real* partnership of the home and the church?

The Return of the Family to Church

Another thing is to be stressed. Formal corporate worship does not come naturally. Like everything else, it has to be learned, according to the liturgical practices of the particular worshiping community. It is not being learned at all in 99 per cent of our church schools. It ought not to be learned there anyway, but

in the sanctuary, where *the* holy table (could there be a more eloquent physical object than that to suggest the family at worship?) is predominant, where the Bible is read impressively and with the authority of him who speaks through its words, where parents, by bowing in prayer, show their need of it as much as children. If it is true that the old family pew is coming back, we do not expect that families would do all the adjusting to existing adult worship practice. Probably at this point most parents, if asked to bring their children to church, would protest vehemently at first because they could not conceive their adult experience of worship as having any meaning for their children. The wording and direction of our prayers, the manner of reading the Scriptures, the singing of hymns and anthems, all these would have to be looked at, to see how—*within the limits of what we must do to provide a proper and whole experience of Christian worship*—a service could be made to be as meaningful as possible to families. Even if the minister did nothing more than refurbish his preaching with more apt illustrations taken from family life and shorten the whole service, much would be accomplished!

And while we are considering the return of our families to the worship in the sanctuary, we must of course bear in mind that the need for the church school, and what it uniquely provides, does continue in terms of creative activities. A child cannot just sit and listen for long periods, whether at worship or in class. All worth-while learning cannot take place in worship. There is a need for the child, grouped with his contemporaries, to be taught and to talk in class

about the subjects covered in a complete Christian education curriculum. This need not take place on Sunday morning. Many churches are finding that more actual learning is taking place during the “released-time” hour during the week. Perhaps some creative changes in our conventional patterns of Christian education are beginning to show on the horizon. Certainly nothing we have said about the family experience of worship should be construed as a proposal to do away with classes and arrangements necessary for a Christian education.

Wherever we are going in this new direction, let’s know why we are going, and know what we are doing with every step we take. A family service (even replacing the church school that Sunday, if necessary) could be tried quarterly, or monthly. Doubtless, duplicate services would have to be employed, for few sanctuaries can hold everybody at once. We ought not to be foolish and expect babies and two-year-old wigglers to profit much from the family pew. A crying baby in church or a new walker loose in the aisle is of little use to the worshiping community. *Begin* at an age when something can be received by the child; what age that is, sensible parents are the best judges.

Little has been said here about what the spiritual consequences in our homes might be if we were regularly to worship together as families. That could be the subject of another entire article, or, more likely, of a whole series of books! Even better, meditate on this yourself. No one knows your family better than you do. What does it really need?

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 5

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

The family pew is the focus of this article. The author shows the areas of confusion that plague parents attempting to decide what to do. He notes that since most families do not worship together at Sunday morning service, the family that does is to a certain extent nonconformist. Dr. Roberts also shows that we perhaps think automatically that as long as the children are in church school, surely everything is all right, whether or not they go to church.

The author proposes that we rethink our modern position on this matter. He thus demonstrates that the family—parents and unconfirmed children—is the people of God. He then shows that going to church as a family may not be so old-fashioned as we may have supposed. The modern family is split up too often. At wor-

ship, it should be able to sense its unity under God.

Although he does not think that the church school can possibly be a substitute for the worship of the family, the author does say that church schools can furnish meaningful experiences for children who do worship with their parents with the whole church. Worship is not merely an adult experience. Worship is the expression of a people, including “child people,” as they congregate before God. Keeping our children away from worship or just bringing them into the sanctuary on certain special occasions is, in this pastor’s way of thinking, a sure sign that we have not understood worship nor apprised ourselves of our place as the worshiping people.

Other people may argue that the child is not ready for worship, showing that the big words, the necessity for orderly behavior, and the lengthy pro-

ceedings only bore the child and give him no opportunity for worshiping as a child. In a word, these detractors from Mr. Roberts’ point of view think that the family pew is merely old-fashioned. They believe that children should come to church when they are ready, and that means when they are twelve or thirteen, not seven. In discussing this matter, the group should not be forced into premature judgments. You should attempt to get recognition of both points of view, to draw attention to ramifications, and to cause reflection on the part of the parents who finally must make up their own minds.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Did you regularly go to church with your family when you were a child? Were you forced or did you want to go? If you did not go with your family, do you now wish that you might have worshiped with them? Why?

2. Discuss the experiments that are described in the article. What do they attempt to achieve? What are their

merits? What are their weaknesses?

3. What arrangements could you make in your church to make family worship more attractive to the families of the church?

4. What do your children feel about worshiping with the family regularly? Where have they acquired their attitudes?

5. Evaluate the author's contention that children are the unconfirmed members of the church and thus belong with the people who worship. If this is true, do we discriminate against

our children by not letting them take their place in the worshiping community?

6. How did you react to the account of Pilgrim worship? Were you impressed or irritated? Why?

7. "No one knows your family better than you do. What does it really need?"

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following resources as a basis for thought or discussion at a later meeting:

Together We Grow, by Dorothy H. Arnim and Herman J. Sweet (The Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; 60 cents; 5 or more, 50 cents).

Bradford of Plymouth, by Bradford Smith. (J. B. Lippincott Company; \$5.00).

"The Church of Our Children," by Janet C. Harbison, and "So You Want Your Child to Be a Christian?" by J. C. Wynn (*Counsel*, Oct.-Dec., 1959).

ANGER—

An Interview with Dr. Harry R. Draper

 THE interviewers asked Dr. Draper to discuss the general subject of anger. The conversation immediately forced the problem of word meaning into clear view. We asked, "Would you care to describe some of the typical masquerades used in order to cloak anger?"

Dr. Draper answered: "I have a suspicion that you are confusing anger and hostility. We really can't deal with these masquerades because, without giving some sustained organized thought, we might miss some of the mechanisms, and we might produce some confusion too."

"Well, go on, then, and clear up our confusion," we said.

"People have a tremendous number of ways of handling hostility. This hostility is more basic than anger. Anger is just one manifestation of hostile feeling, and is not necessarily indicative of deep destructive hostility. We usually think of hostility as destructive, but this destructive quality shouldn't be confused with anger. And anger is what you wanted to talk about with me, although, as I say, I'm not quite sure that you really mean anger. Anger, you see, is a biological phenomenon. It is the response of an organism to irritants, the reaction to noxious stimuli. Necessarily, it is important for the organism's survival. In its very nature anger is a retaliation; it aims to harm, to strike back, or even to kill. Anger, as such, is not incompatible with real, deep, abiding love."

We then inquired further into this apparent paradox. Dr. Draper indicated that anger, as a reaction to offensive situations, seldom has anything to do with a *total* situation. It is more often a transient reaction to an immediate situation. A mother, for instance, reacts with anger when her child, dressed in his good clothes, plays hide and seek in the coal yard. This is offensive behavior. She is justified in this re-

action. Introduce an irritant into the best, the very finest relationship, and an angry reaction is provoked. The mother's anger is duplicated in the child when he is, to his way of thinking, forced to take a bath at the exact moment when a play project is in full operation. He reacts angrily to this irritating force, with some justice on his side.

"Anger," Dr. Draper continued, "is compatible with love. When it is healthily expressed, anger is probably best seen—and with fewest damaging consequences—in the situations in which there is the security of real love. Love seems to make it all right to get angry, in other words, to be the people we actually are. Anger is not the deep, sustained sort of thing that I think of hostility being. It's a sort of flash in the pan—nothing more or nothing less—as long as the situation is secure enough for people to react the way they basically have to react."

At this point we asked for an elaboration of the doctor's undeveloped statements on hostility.

"Real hostility is a destructive force, always a potentially destructive force. Expressions of this real hostility, as distinguished from anger, are tough for everybody. Hostility can be manifested by overt hatred, overt destructiveness, and so on. Anger may often be a *part* of the experience of overt hatred, but hostility need not be expressed, necessarily, in this way. Hostility can be expressed in extremely passive forms. I think, for instance, of the super-sweet person who clothes herself in an unctious goodness, the sort of person, you know, who is competing with God. This person can be expressing hostility even though the form of expression is benign.

"Look at the way Community X handles its hostility. It has a reputation for being a genteel, liberal, comfortable place in which to live. But recently, all kinds of trouble have been breaking out among the adolescents. The young people are stealing and have gone in for some destructive vandalism. No official word of this ever leaks out. As a matter of fact, most

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of the people in Community X don't even know about it, and the people who do don't talk. The community leaders seem willing to go to any lengths in order to deny the outbreak of hostility.

"Let us say that some people in this community *do* know what is going on. But were they to raise their voices in public and point out what they know, they might be victimized by subtle but very intense community retaliation. These people then fear the tough consequences that their families might suffer, and so they are effectively shut up before they ever say a word. What I am saying is that hostility as a community phenomenon may inhibit the truth and make healthy anger or indignation impossible. So the people in Community X live in a kind of uneasy truce with hostility that is finding ways to break out anyway."

Upon asking where hostility comes from, and how it is formed, we got no answer. Dr. Draper believes that the particular origin of particular hostility varies immensely, so that general remarks would not prove very useful. But he did indicate a few ways in which hostility can be expressed.

He began with an illustration: "This morning I had an appointment. But I became involved in some phone conversations with the upset family of one of my patients. So I was late. At first thought, I had a perfectly good excuse. *However*, upon reflecting further I had to acknowledge that there might have been another factor. Namely, that the appointment had been made against my wishes, and I really hadn't wanted to keep it at all. The chronically late person is frequently expressing hostility. We are all late at times, of course, with good reason, but frequently it is an unconscious resistance to an appointment we did not wish to keep."

He reflected a moment and then went on. "People who procrastinate a lot are expressing hostility in perhaps the only acceptable way that they can find. Also, take the people who are forever objecting to the order of things, chronic grippers for whom life is forever a bed of thorns and never roses. These people are hostile and express their hostility more or less openly in their objections to anything and everything.

"There are sick people, too. They are 'sick' all the time. This is not a conscious business at all, but these people frequently are expressing themselves negatively. They attempt, *unconsciously*, to control their environment by 'illness.' Anyone who has lived in a family with one of these people can tell you how effective they can be. Because of their negative incapacitating hostility they can manipulate the household and often other parts of their environment, including pastors, friends, and doctors.

"Leon Saul, in his book, *The Hostile Mind*, says that hostility is the essential evil in people. I think he is right. People never have a nonthreatening, entirely co-operative environment to grow up in. At many points the environment is hostile toward them. In re-

sponse they develop these various hostile stances toward it. Sometimes the hostility is focused on a person, sometimes on inanimate objects, and sometimes on institutions. But in one way or another, people grow up to feel that life has it in for them in particular ways. There are all kinds of gradations of quality in the estimation people have of the hostile environment into which they have been thrust, but their perception of the places at which life has been unnecessarily hostile with them forces them into hostile attitudes.

"We have to see that most hostility is expressed in reasonably acceptable ways. I know many hostile characters who sublimate their hostility by assuming virtually superhuman work loads. They do a lot of good for their communities, and their conscious motivations for doing this great lot of good are excellent. But this should not blind us to the fact that what drives them to accept the demands of their heavy work load is hostility. Other people cannot drain off their hostility in such useful ways. These are the people who regress into severe illness or who are, as the saying correctly puts it, driven to drink. Some people act out their hostility in actual criminality. As a prison psychiatrist, I see this all the time. But I also live in a society that has people in it who are criminoid, that is to say, who misuse other people, threaten them, rob them (in acceptable ways), and so on. They violate the spirit, not the letter, of the law. There really is frequently only a fine line, as far as hostility is concerned, between the people in jail and the people out of jail."

Dr. Draper at this point began to expand his original statements concerning the relationship between anger and hostility by pointing out that chronic anger in a person is a most easily spotted hostile expression. He told us that the chronically angry person who is "just mad" at almost everything all the time gives us a chance to see how destructive, how socially useless, how *essentially evil* hostility really is. It produces suffering in other people. It causes pain. It very often deeply harms. It leads to further hostile reactions and provokes hostile reactions in other people. It is a way of life, Dr. Draper feels, that is forever aggressively losing a war. The hostile person to some extent sees life as a war, and for that reason, is always losing.

In the midst of this extended discussion we asked this question: "Is it at all useful for parents to have even a limited understanding of the basic character of hostility?"

He answered: "To this extent. If the philosophy, or the values, or whatever you want to call the ruling ideas within a home, require the inhibition of any explicit anger or suppress any outwardly angry people—on the basis of justice or love or something else or, really, *anything* else, then the anger is going to express itself in ways that are bound to become increasingly more difficult for angry people to acknowledge. This underground anger produces sullen, quiet children because the anger has become subtle. It boils

inside, and this is not good. Do you get angry with your children and do your children get angry with you?" The interviewers indicated that there was a good bit of anger in their own homes. "Then your children have the opportunity to explode; the impulses that their biological systems mobilize in the face of something that is offensive to them are allowed to be felt and expressed. But let me assure you that I know of a great many homes in which this is not allowed to happen. Total peace and goodness and equanimity in any home are almost necessarily cause for question, or even concern. These may be good homes in many ways, but they are not healthy homes, and the children who grow up in them are going to be adults who will have significant needs to fight a war with life that has not been very nice to them, very just, and certainly not understanding."

"What about this expression 'urge to kill' that you used early in the interview?" we asked.

"Well," Dr. Draper mused, "I remember that my very dear friend and teacher, the late Dr. Edward A. Strecker, defined anger as 'the urge to kill.' I think it is a very useful way to look at anger and a good way for parents to look at anger. Dr. Strecker used an example something like this: Mr. A steps on Mr. B's toes. Mr. B has an angry reaction. This is the urge to kill. But it is only a little urge, a minor impulse. So Mr. B kills Mr. A a little bit by saying 'Ouch!' or 'Why don't you look where you're going!' What we have here is Mr. B killing Mr. A a little bit and in an

insignificant way. Now the urge to kill has all kinds of gradations, and, fortunately, most of these are civilized. When you consider the amount of anger that is expressed every day in our society by every member of the society, it really is remarkable how little killing takes place. And this is good, that we don't mobilize all our energies at the least irritant. It is good, in other words, that we just kill one another a little bit. But we have fallen short of our understanding of anger if we do not see it as something that is this aggressive, this important, and this far-reaching."

We warned Dr. Draper that the interview would shortly have to be closed off, so we asked him to make any kind of summary remarks that he cared to. He concluded the interview with these words: "I hope that parents who read this article may learn to accept anger as a part of their own growing up, and definitely as a part of their children's growing up. Realistic insight into the meaning of anger is an operational tool for them that has a definite usefulness. Youngsters are much less apt to grow into a hostile adulthood if they enjoy a measure of free expression when they are kids. Of course, we don't advocate completely unbridled expression of all feelings for anyone, but one of the concrete ways that I can think of to slow down the production of this hostility factory is to permit and, indeed, help people to find appropriate means of expressing anger. Parents who can freely talk about these things among themselves and with each other have got the thing out in the open."

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 6

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

This article focuses attention upon one pertinent fact. People react angrily to offensive or threatening situations. Our public standards of behavior forbid exhibitions of anger except in unusual circumstances. Therefore we have unrealistic controls over reactions we cannot help or cannot stop. The result is internal strife and skillfully fashioned disguises for the abiding hostility we begin to feel toward such an unthoughtful and unrealistic world. Dr. Draper seems to feel that parents have a responsibility to maintain a home in which anger is not forbidden. Probably many parents reading and discussing this article feel that the home should be a "happy" place, namely, the last place in the world where a person should express his anger.

In describing anger as a biological reaction to noxious stimuli, Dr.

Draper calls attention to the fact that anger as such is a reaction that is not calculated. It is immediate. It generally is accompanied by flushed face or loud heartbeat or other physical changes. A loving home should thus be the place where we can react in exactly the human way we must react to irritants.

The leader of the discussion should not feel that he has to defend any point of view, or that he must assume responsibility for getting all the group members to accept the realities of anger. He should attempt, however, to make sure that the point of view of the article has been properly understood. Having done this, he will have made insight possible.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What was the point of view of your parents toward anger? Were you "allowed to be angry"—within limits?

2. What is your own point of view in your home?

3. Discuss anger as "the urge to kill." Is this realistic, or is it unnecessarily harsh?

4. Can you predict the kinds of situations in which you probably will react angrily? in which your children will react angrily?

5. What distinction does Dr. Draper make between hostility and anger? Is this helpful?

6. Consider the various ways in which hostility is disguised. Why should disguises have to be devised?

7. Do the many Biblical admonitions against "anger" (see, for instance, *Matt. 5: 21-26*; *Eph. 4: 25-27*) refer to a reality that the article would term anger or hostility?

FOR FURTHER READING

You might consider the following resources as a basis for thought or discussion at a later meeting:

The Hostile Mind, by Leon J. Saul (Random House, Inc., 1956, \$3.50).

"Help Them Cope with Strong Feelings," by E. G. Neisser, *Parents' magazine*, February, 1959.

Over the *Crossroads* Desk

UNEASINESS. Emptiness. Causelessness. Uncertainty. In such terms this generation is accurately described by commentators and observers. We have lost our nerve and seek escape by climbing into a glass tube in the living room every night and pulling the lid down after us.

It is true; but it has been said so repeatedly that we become impatient. What are the solutions? What way out or over? How do we get beyond the description? The answer, of course, is that "there are no easy answers," and with that the dialogue closes or the speech ends. Which gets us a long way toward nowhere at all!

It is true. There are no theoretical, general, universal, mass answers that can be legislated nationally and internationally and implemented by multibillion-dollar budgets that won't cost any of us personally anything but a little more money up to the city limits of our convenience. We want painless, impersonal, personally irresponsible solutions that we need not go through the fire to reach. We want solutions now, with no down payment and the first installment not due until January 15, 1998. We want to "have our cake and eat it too," to coin a new and refreshing phrase. We want to fill our emptiness with something pleasurable, when it can only be filled with suffering; so we would rather stay empty and go on trying to fill it with "the good life." But the good life, the abundant life, is simply *not* the "aesthetically good and satisfying life." It is good only in being in the image of God's life as revealed in Christ ("For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. . . . The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing." *John 18: 37; 5: 19-20*), which means remaining sensitive to people and suffering their pains, agonies, injustices, joys, fears, sobs, excitements, and deaths with them.

It is true. The only answers or solutions—"solutions," indeed!—are simply not impersonal; they are given, formulated, constructed out of the warm, wet substance of a person's own personal, red, smeary,

life-ebbing blood. "Bleed to death" is the requirement of God, the mind of Christ. This we won't do. Any other answer is what we want. We are afraid to bleed; and we have good reason to be afraid, for there is nothing pleasurable or aesthetically satisfying about bleeding or dying. Our first reaction is to stop it as fast as possible with the nearest bandage, towel, or tourniquet. The sight of a pool of spilled human blood is sickening, because it is the vehicle of life, and if we lose it, we die. There is nothing pleasantly, warmly, glowingly sentimental about bleeding to death; just as there is nothing redemptive about reveling in maudlin tears springing from a demonically selfish use of another's grief as an excuse to satisfy our own lust to express how unfairly we feel the world has abused us. False sentimentality is viciously diabolic. Under the guise of concern for another we satisfy our craving for our own self-thrilled well-being. This is a thoroughly corrupt perversion of that sentiment or sympathy or sensitivity in which we dare to expose the raw nerves of our being to the living, exposed, burning soul of another, to receive the agony and perplexity, the choices and consequences of another as personally our own, and to pour out our blood on the ground for his sake.

It is true. The vast emptiness of modern society can be filled only with the fullness of a heavenly Father bled white and dead in Jesus Christ. "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." (*Col. 1: 19-20*.) And we are called to die for the sake of men as we share Christ's sufferings and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Jack M. MacLeod



An answer for laymen
on the clergy-laity question

Agents of Reconciliation

By **Arnold B. Come**

Standing today at an altogether new pinnacle of "success," the Christian church also stands in need as never before of recalling that its real purpose in the world is not to be served but to serve. The relationship of this purpose to the inner structure of church membership is the theme of the present book. It is one of the first among a growing body of such literature to discuss the important clergy-laity question in terms the *laity* can grasp. God elects the church, Dr. Come points out, to be his agent of reconciliation—to be the medium through which his truth and love, embodied forever in the life and work of the Reconciler, Christ, shine into all the world, not to convert or perfect, but to bring it into an ever-widening "crisis" of decision. The witness of Christian living is accomplished not alone by the church as an organizational entity. It is accomplished by *every* Christian in his daily relationships with the world. Therefore, maintains the author, the ministries of the contemporary church must be radically reformulated to the point where all members bear, have the sense of bearing, responsibility for the upbuilding of the church. Such reformulation must lead to complete abandonment of the distinction between, and even the terminology of, "clergy" and "laity." Diversity of function must of necessity continue, and the church must retain control of certain ones through ordination. But all functions are only means to the larger goal, and in a church capable of meeting the new demands of the modern world the aim of the *whole* program must be to prepare the *whole* membership for the witness role.

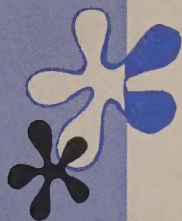
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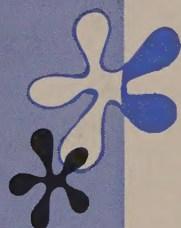
Retarded Children: God's Children

By Sigurd D. Petersen

This needed book recounts the experience of a Protestant minister who has become professionally engaged in the lives of children suffering from mental retardation. Mr. Petersen is Psychiatric Chaplain at Parsons State Hospital and Training Center in Parsons, Kansas. The Center treats and trains retarded children between the ages of six and twenty-one, caring for at the present time over six hundred patients. Under proper direction, the author reveals, these children can know the love of God, receive strength to overcome what they feel is sin, participate in the service of the church, pray. In order to realize the greatest proficiencies within their ability they need the kind of environment provided at Parsons and described in this completely absorbing book. **RETARDED CHILDREN: GOD'S CHILDREN** is not a technical study; it is full of human interest and concerned primarily with the spiritual needs of persons who, not too long ago, were all too often neglected and forgotten. Parents who may have a retarded child will find here much encouragement and guidance. Churches anxious to make the rightful extension of their religious ministry to these special, precious ones are given a wealth of concrete suggestions.

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for religious teaching—*



Church Education for Tomorrow

By Wesner Fallaw

Protestants today are deeply concerned over the problem of religious illiteracy. What to do about it is detailed brilliantly and boldly in this book by a renowned authority in the field of Christian education. The term Dr. Fallaw prefers is "church education," by which is meant a teaching-learning enterprise, grounded in theology and Scripture, aimed to help persons know God through experiencing Christ within the community of Christians, the church. So conceived, the task calls for more valid teaching than is presently provided—demands not only teaching competency but the most thorough Biblical and theological knowledge. Because of his education and opportunity, the pastor is the logical person to teach in the church. Laymen are far better suited to assuming the administrative and other *nonteaching* offices. Here, based on the conviction that the Sunday school is clearly outmoded, are proposals for a fundamental reconstruction of church life. Fresh, drastic, prophetic, they are for all Christians who sincerely want the best they can get in religious education.

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